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THE
TRAGEDIES
OF
SOPHOCLES,

Translated from the GREEK.
WITH

NOTES

HISTORICAL, MORAL and CRITICAL;
Wherein several Mistakes of EDITORS and the
old SCHOLIASTS are corrected, and the true
Sense of the AUTHOR cleared.

To which is prefix'd, a

PREFACE;

CONTAINING

- I. A Defence of TRAGICK POETRY; wherein is occasionally shewn, how some *Modern Poets* have transgressed the established Laws of POETRY which the *Ancients* observed.
- II. An historical Account of its Rise and Progress.
- III. A Comparison of the ancient Tragedians with each other.

By GEORGE ADAMS, A. B.
Late of St. John's College in Cambridge:

*Take you the Greek Examples for your Light
In hand, and turn them over Day and Night.*

BEN. JOHNSON'S HOR.

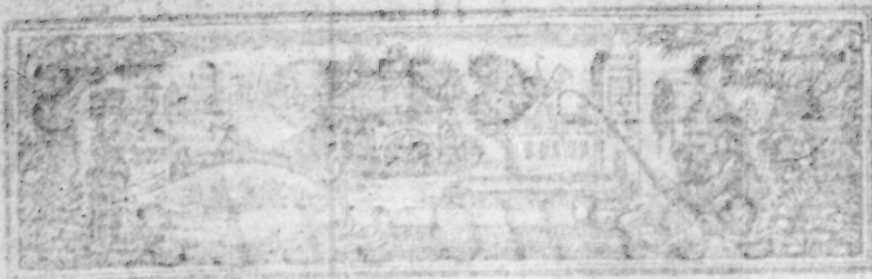
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Printed for C. Davis in the Strand, and
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TO HIS GRACE

WILLIAM

Duke of *Manchester*,

*Viscount Mandevil, Baron
of Kimbolton, Knight of
the most honourable Order
of the Bath, and one of
the Lords of his Majesty's
Bedchamber, &c.*

MY LORD,



HIS Translation
being now to visit
the Publick, hum-
bly throws itself

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at

DEDICATION.

at your Grace's Feet; a Work, which if done by a skilful Hand, might with Justice claim a Right to the Protection of so great a Patron. For Tragick Poetry, however it hath been abus'd and perverted to other Ends than those for which it was first design'd, yet in its State of Innocence hath been countenanc'd by Men of the first Rank, and was therefore anciently styl'd the Poem of Kings: And my Author both in his own and in all succeeding Times, was and will be in the highest Esteem with all Lovers of this

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this Art, for his Improvement of it. But I am conscious that a judicious Reader will find too many Imperfections in this Performance, and it were the highest Presumption to desire you to patronize them : Therefore I rather take this as an Opportunity of gratifying my Ambition, to record my self among the Number of those who have the Honour to be acquainted with your Grace ; an Ambition, which I have Reason to hope the same Goodness in your Grace which I have already experienced

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rienc'd in so many Instances, will indulge: I mean an affable and courteous Behaviour, a condescending Meekness and Humanity, for which your Grace is so deservedly fam'd. Nor shall I presume to write in the common Style of Dedications, both because your Grace's Praise is a Theme so much beyond my weak Capacity, and which the World is too well acquainted with already, not to know how far whatever I can say upon it is below your Grace's Merits; and that because were I equal to
3 it,

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it, yet you are too generous to accept of such Incense as is usually offer'd in Dedications. For it is a Disposition inseparable from noble Minds to love Virtue more for its own Sake, than for any popular Applause, and when they do good not to think it worth their least Regard what others say or think of them for it: And therefore I shall pass by in Silence many Virtues which have gain'd your Grace the Admirati-on and Praise of Mankind; it were needless for me to write of what the World

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already so loudly talks, which, however mortify'd Virtue may be to all Desires of Praise and Glory, yet will never fail to give her those Rewards. Nor is Heaven regardless of its principal Favourites, but reserves for them its choicest Blessings even in this Life, as an earnest of their future; of this Truth there can be no more plain Proof than its bestowing so many on your Grace, as a beautiful Consort discreet beyond her Years, and worthy your Grace, an honourable Station, high above the common Rank of Mankind,

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kind, and the Favour of the best of Princes. This latter is indeed but the just Reward of a constant Adherence and unshaken Loyalty to the illustrious House of *Hanover*, a hearty Zeal for the Protestant Cause, and a Disposition ready upon all Occasions to encourage the Friends, and discourage the Enemies of both, so conspicuous in your Grace. How do all those who are Lovers of our present happy Constitution, express this who live near the Place of your usual Residence ! Whenever the joyful Rumour is spread

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spread of your Return home among them, how do their Eyes, their Actions, their Words, declare the Joy which Men naturally conceive from the Possession of their Blessing? How do they praise that Goodness from which they enjoy so many good Effects? But on the contrary, when they are alarmed with the sad News of your Departure, how doth Sadness and Discontent sit upon every Brow? How doth their pensive Silence or Complaints declare their Grief, while they have nothing to comfort themselves

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selves with, but the dear Remembrance of the Happiness they enjoy'd by your Presence, under the Loss of it.

Permit me therefore, my LORD, to join in the general Wish that your Grace would return home to cheer those Eyes, and comfort those Hearts which languish for your Absence; and yet even this I hardly dare to do, when I consider your Grace shining as a Star in its proper Sphere near the Person of his Majesty.

The World can never
too

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too much commend a Prince who hath in so particular a Manner discover'd his Prudence, namely, by the Choice of a Peer so well qualify'd as your Grace for a Place of Honour and Trust in his Government, and of such Nearness to his Royal Person. They are such faithful Ministers who render his Majesty formidable to private Enemies (if such there can be) and foreign Foes; they render him lov'd by his own Subjects, and admir'd by foreign Potentates, while they discover in his Royal Mind a
Dispo-

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Disposition ready to determine his Choice in those whose Virtues are most excellent. In such he may safely confide, whom an innate Principle of Goodness, (which loves Virtue for its own Sake and all others in whom it appears to be, but especially a Sovereign) obliges to be loyal. But what less can be expected from a Prince, whose every Act of his short, as yet, tho' glorious Reign, seems to confess that he was sent by Providence to make us a happy and flourishing People? And what less can be expected

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pected from the Unanimity of the present Parliament, but that his Majesty's pious Endeavours for that Purpose will be seconded by their Consultations? And that they may, may Heaven inspire every Member of that most honourable Assembly with a Spirit of Loyalty to his Majesty, and Zeal for the publick Good. And when private Rebellions, or foreign Commotions shall call his unwilling Arms to the Field (but may the Powers grant that that Time may never come) may the same Loyalty and Zeal unite all those

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those who draw the Sword
in his Cause, and may they
likewise have all those
martial Virtues as are ne-
cessary to enable them to
overcome their great Ma-
ster's Enemies. In a Word,
may all his Majesty's Sub-
jects pay him those Duties
of Love and Honour to
his Person, and Submission
to his Laws that they are
bound to do, and, which
at once includes all, and
more than I can wish both
for his Majesty and your
Grace, may you always
continue to be what you
are, still flourishing in the
Fulness of those Honours
and

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and other Blessings you
now enjoy, and may all
his Subjects copy after
your bright Example.
These are the sincere
and hearty Prayers of

My LORD,

Your Grace's

most humble,

most obedient, and

devoted Servant,

Geo. Adams.



THE
PREFACE.

AFTER the universal Applause which the learned World have given to the Tragedies of *Sophocles*, it would be needless to say any Thing to recommend a Translation of them, were all People conversant with them: Yet since far the greater Part of the World are the Ignorant and Unlearned, and, who, for that very Reason do not only decry Dramatick,
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but all kinds of Poetry in general, as to them it is necessary to speak in its Defence. For to what Purpose is it to shew them the Excellency of an Author which consists in an Art which they in general condemn, as a means of corrupting Mens Morals, and eradicating out of their Minds the Principles of Virtue? But I hope to make it appear in the Sequel of this Discourse, that this Accusation is not only unjust, but that Tragedy, which is the Object of their utter Aversion, is not only an innocent Diversion but even useful, for the Improvement of Mens Manners, and Direction of their Lives, by inspiring them with the Love of Virtue and Hatred of Vice, by shewing in their proper Colours the Beauty of one and the Deformity of the other; and, as Men are endowed with reasonable Souls, capable of chusing Good, and refusing Evil, by directing them to the proper

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per Objects of their Choice and Love, as well as of their Hatred and Aver-
sion.

But here it must be understood, that I only by Tragedy mean those of *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, and such as are built upon their Plan, not such Stuff as ignorant Poetafters have imposed upon the World for Tragedy since their Times: Who studying more how to fill their Pockets than improve their Hearers, chose to compose such Pieces as would gratify Mens extravagant Humours, as better serving their avaritious Purposes.

This Avarice is a Fault of which not *Dorsennus* only was guilty, of whom *Horace* gives this Character, *Epist. lib. 2.*

*Gessit enim nummum in Loculos de-
mittere ; post hoc
Securus, cadat, an recto stet Fabu-
la talo.*

*If the Prætor paid him well for his
Pains*

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Pains in composing his Pieces, he was careless what Reputation they had afterwards in the World. I am afraid the celebrated *Shakespear* cannot be intirely acquitted from having a Share in this Charge, which perhaps was the Occasion of so many gross Irregularities in that Poet, which nothing but his other Excellencies can excuse.

This Avarice of the Poets brought a Scandal upon the Art in general, and gave Ground to many Objections against it, which abstracted from its Abuse, is one of the noblest Arts that ever was invented.

For not to mention the wonderful Effects which have been produced on the Minds of Men who were present at the acting of good Tragedies, how Tyrants have forgot their Cruelty, the Ambitious been taught to moderate their Desires, the Slothful to earn Glory in the Service of their Country; (which as it is the Design, so it hath

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hath been the Effect of them,) what is Tragedy but an Imitation of the Actions of Men, and which, by exciting in us Terror and Compassion for their Misfortunes, teacheth us to moderate those Passions, and avoid those Faults whose Prevalence may be like to carry us into the same, or Misfortunes like those which we see them suffer? For Instance, who that reads the Tragedy of *Oedipus*, but is inclined to pity that miserable Prince, and will not take Care to avoid that Rashness and Curiosity which drove him into all his Misfortunes? Who that reads the Tragedy of *Ajax* and his sad Fate, will not pity him, and resolve against being overcome by his Anger and Rage, the miserable Causes of it? Again, the Tragedy of *Antigone* is a good Lesson for Arbitrary Princes to take Care how their Laws interfere with those of God and Nature, and how they put their

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Sanctions in Execution against the Transgressors of them.

Nor are the rest of the Tragedies of *Sophocles* without their Morals, to teach Men to reduce their Passions to the Subjection of their Reason, and to avoid those Faults, which are the Occasions of Misfortunes to the principal Characters ; and lastly, (that which is the Design of perfect Tragedies) they set before our Eyes the Misfortunes which Men fall into by their involuntary Offences, and so prepare us to bear our own Misfortunes with Patience, when we consider how light they are in Comparison of theirs whom we see represented upon the Theatre. When we see represented the Miseries of *Oedipus* and *Philoctetes*, we see that neither Greatness nor Innocence are sufficient to secure us from the Calamities incident to Man : And when we compare our own Condition with theirs, and consider how little they deserved the Fate they

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they suffered, it encourageth us with more Chearfulness to combat the Storms we meet with, in our Passage thro' the raging Waves of this troublesome Life.

There is a very pertinent Reflection to this Purpose made by the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius*, *cap. 6. lib. 9.* “Tragedies, says he, were first introduced to put Men in Mind of those Accidents which happen in their Lives, to inform them that they must necessarily come, and teach them that those Things which they see with some Delight on the Stage, should not appear unsupportable in the Grand Theatre of the World; for you see plainly that such ought to be the *Catastrophe* of all Pieces: And those who cry so much on the Theatre, Oh *Cytheron*, do not deliver themselves from their own Evils.” Tho' this is said only in respect to one Effect of Tragedy, namely, the refining Terror and

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Compassion ; yet it shews how high an Opinion even a *Stoick* had for this Art.

The other Excellencies of it I shall make out by a Comparison of Poetry, of which Tragedy is the noblest kind, with the other two Sciences which are chiefly reckoned to contribute towards the polishing of Mankind, and instructing them in the Way of their Duty, in order to present and future Happiness: And those are History and Morality, where I shall shew how far Poetry excels them both, and is more conducive to that Purpose. Other Sciences, as Metaphysicks, Arithmetick, and Astronomy, being only subservient to the other, cannot presume to enter the List in this Dispute.

For Example, Astronomy consists in observing the Order, Harmony and Contrivance of the celestial Bodies, their steady Revolutions, and the various Seasons of the Year thereby

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by produced, and tho' it helps to instruct Men, it doth it not directly by its own Power, but mediately, *i. e.* by giving us high and noble Sentiments of God, shewing that he is great and powerful in all his Works, that he is a God of Order and Harmony, and by Consequence that he requires it in Man, the noblest Part of the Creation, which consists in keeping his Passions under the Subjection of Reason, (for all Vice is nothing else but the Effects of the Irregularity of Mens Passions) and shewing that as he is powerful and just, he will certainly punish such Disorders and Irregularities in rational Creatures. For the same Reason Metaphysicks, which consist in Contemplation of the Nature of Spirits are subservient to the same Ends (as may be said of all other Sciences that can be thought of, except Divinity) *i. e.* the Instruction of Men, and making them what they should be,

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be; which are the direct and immediate Ends of History, Morality and Poetry. For Divinity, that must always be excepted, whose present Design is to establish the Truth of revealed Doctrines of the utmost Importance, with respect not only to this Life, but even to an eternal one hereafter. What I am therefore to prove is, that Poetry is more edifying and instructive to Man in order to a due Regulation of their Lives, than either History or Morality. First then as to History, what is it but a faithful Narration of the Actions of Men, and other Accidents with their Circumstances? But it is defective in this particular, for although it may give us Instances of Persons who have suffered by their Vices, or any other Causes with which we are unacquainted; yet in giving us those Instances, it still leaves us ignorant for want of Precepts, to teach us how to behave our selves, should any of those Cases happen

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happen to be ours: For although we might guess at the Cause of a Person's Sufferings, as a proud Man, a tyrannical King, &c. we cannot affirm that his Pride, or his Tyranny was the Causes of those Sufferings, nor can we affirm that he would not have suffered such Things had he been otherwise. Some Folly or Indiscretion or other Thing which we are ignorant of, might have caused his Misfortunes, which had he avoided, he might still have prospered very well in his other Vices: So different are the Causes of all Things which happen, and so obscure the Paths to trace them out.

If indeed an Historian in the Description of a Character tells us what is to be done and what avoided, he then enters upon the Province of the Moralist or Poet. But the Events of History, as such, are far from instructing Men, or affording them any general Maxims for directing their Lives. For Instance, what Moral is
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to be drawn from a cursed Usurper dying in his Bed, and a just King murdered by his Subjects? A just *Cicero* and true Patriot of his Country suffering a cruel Death from an ambitious *Anthony*? The just *Cato* besieged and forced to lay violent Hands on himself, while Rebel *Cæsar*'s Name lives with Honour? So that it is impossible to draw any general Maxims from particular Events, and those bare Matters of Fact which Historians are obliged to relate. Morality labours under the same Defect, for although a Moralist may define Prudence, Justice, Temperance and other Virtues, with their opposite Vices, and by many convincing Arguments drawn from the Nature of Things shew us how much one is preferable to the other, yet he wants Example to enforce those Precepts, to shew how Persons by their Virtue have been happy in their Lives, and glorious after Death, and again to shew

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shew into what Calamities particular Persons have fallen by the Prevalence of those Vices they are declaiming against. But a judicious Poet takes in both Precept and Example, for as he is purely the Maker of his own Creature, he forms him as he pleases, and represents to us such Persons as drew on themselves their own Misfortunes by their Vices and Follies (as *Sophocles* doth in the Tragedies of *Ajax*, *Oedipus*, *Trachiniæ*, &c.) or who rendered themselves the Objects of our Admiration and Praise, as *Ulysses* and *Theseus*. We see nothing in any of those Characters, but what is to be done, or what avoided; for the Poet shews us what Vices or Follies were the next and immediate Cause of the Sufferings of the one, and what Virtues gained the other Praise. *Oedipus* is represented as a Prince, who, tho' he had many excellent Virtues, as Justice, Courage and Tenderness for the Welfare of his People, yet fell
into

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into his Misfortunes by his prodigious Rashness and Curiosity. And by his Conduct in a particular Instance the Poet instructs us to avoid those Faults which brought on him his Misfortunes.

The same may be said of *Ajax*, who is represented as a Person whose Wrath and Malice ruined him; and of *Deianira*, who was undone by too great Credulity, and giving Way too much to that weak Passion of Jealousy. On the other hand the Character of *Ulysses* is distinguished by several excellent Qualities, as his Prudence in composing the Strife between *Agamemnon* and *Teucrus*, his placable and forgiving Temper toward *Ajax*.

The Character of *Theseus* in *Oedipus Coloneus* is likewise the Draught of a righteous King, neither terrified by Threats, nor allured by Flatteries from executing Justice among his People, when the Complaints of the Miserable call for his Assistance. In
any

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any of these Cases we cannot possibly fail of knowing how to behave ourselves when we read those Poems, should we fall into the same or the like Circumstances with the Persons there represented. For they are so represented that their Words and Actions speak the Men, and thereby of Necessity render them the Objects of our Love or Hatred, and what we love or hate in another, will have some Effect upon our own Conduct. Whereas the Moralist only discourses of Virtue and Vice in a methodical Way, defines them according to their Subjects, Causes, and Effects ; and enlarges upon each Division, but is destitute of Example, to shew where those Virtues or Vices are display'd. And the Historian confines himself to strict Matters of Fact, but shews us not how they ought to influence our Conduct. A Poet according to his Name and the Import of his Office, being

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being derived from the *Greek* Word Ποιητής, a *Creator* or *Maker*, is only to shew Men what they should or should not be, not what they are, or are not, as the Historian doth, and therefore he cannot fail of laying down proper Instructions for the Conduct of Life, and shewing in others what they ought to do themselves. And thus he answers those Ends which both Historians and Moralists propose, yet labours under none of those Defects which they do; for, as hath been shewn, he gives us the particular Instances wherein they have been rash or imprudent, cruel and outrageous, or, on the contrary, wise, just and pious, and the Motives upon which they proceeded, and how they behaved themselves in such Circumstances and the Consequences thereof, which must needs afford Matter of great Use and Application to the Hearers. This is no new Observation,

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tion, but what *Horace* hath long ago made, who tells us that *Homer* instructed Men what to do, and what to avoid, better than either *Chrysippus* or *Crantor*. *Ep. 2. Lib. 1.*

*Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe,
quid utile, quid non,
Pleniùs & meliùs Chrysippo &
Crantore dicit.*

Now of all Kinds of Poetry Tragedy is confessedly the noblest, and therefore better answers this End. Our modern Tragedies are, indeed, far less instructive than those of the Antients in this Way, for want of the *Chorus* which the other had, whose Office it was to make moral Applications in their Songs, from what was said by the Actors in the foregoing Episode, in which they always conformed themselves to the Rules of that religious Worship which was in Vogue among them. I shall give the Reader the
b follow-

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following Instance, as a Proof of this Truth, out of *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Jocasta thinking that the Oracle which foretold the Fate of *Laius* was false, viz. that he should be murdered by his Son *Oedipus*, whom she believed to be dead, little thinking that that Servant to whom she delivered him, did not execute his Orders out of Pity to the Child, speaks in a contemptuous Manner of all Oracles in General, and says, That there is as little Reason that we should believe that Part of the Oracle which declared he should commit Incest with his Mother, or any other Oracle whatsoever, as that which she had already proved false.

This from the Mouth of a Queen might be of very pernicious Consequence to the Hearers, by tending to beget in their Minds a Contempt of all religious Worship. The *Chorus* therefore to prevent the natural Effects of so bad an Example, and
preserve

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preserve in the Minds of the Audience a due Reverence for Religion, declares there is a terrible God that will punish all Impiety, either in our Words or Actions, and prays that he would not revenge the Impiety of *Jocasta* on that City, *Act. III. Scene V. May the Gods grant me to enjoy a happy State, &c.*

The Way therefore to make our Theatres as instructive as the *Athenian* was, is to restore the *Chorus*, and for ever to banish from the Stage such Stuff with which it is daily pestered. I shall not however take upon me to dictate so far, as to say what should, or should not be done here in this kind among us, who live under so wise a Government; but leave it to those of better Judgment and greater Power, whether so considerable an Innovation be convenient, or not; but shall proceed to answer two grand Objections which are brought against the Use of Tragedy:

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gedy: The first is, that it is only suited to a State of Heathenism; the other, that it is very much abused; and the Answer which I shall make to these, shall be not only sufficient to confute these Objections, but likewise farther recommend this kind of Poetry. The former in its full Force and Vigour is thus. Although it should be granted, that in a State of Heathenism, when Mankind had but imperfect Notions of a future State, and the wisest of the Philosophers doubted whether there was any such Thing at all, or not, such Helps as Tragedy, might be very useful, to help the Philosophers by Fables and Similitudes, and make out what they could not in the Reformation of Men: Yet to us who live under the Dispensation of the Gospel, a most perfect Rule of Faith and Obedience delivered by our great Prophet *Jesus Christ*, and are assured by the most convin-

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convincing Arguments of the Certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, what Occasion can there be for any such Helps as Tragedy? Since the Holy Scriptures afford all the Arguments that can be desired to persuade us to embrace Religion and Virtue, and abhor Vice.

It is true, were it so that the Precepts of the Gospel had their intended Effect, and we saw that all Men lived according to them; that is, were every Man really what he should be, then indeed all Theatrical Recreations were useless. Yet since Experience informs us that the Case is quite otherwise, and we often see Men fall into the greatest Inconveniences, through one predominant Passion or other; why should we slight such Helps as can be any Way conducive to so good an End, as the subduing those Passions to the Government

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vernment of Reason? We have the Examples not only of the Prophets, but of our Saviour himself to authorize a parabolical Way of Instruction, which they often had Recourse to, rather than Precept. *Nathan* in particular brought *David* to Repentance by a very remarkable Parable; see 2 *Sam.* xii.

We have likewise many Parables of our Blessed Saviour in the Scripture; yea, we read in one Place that he so far preferr'd it to Precept, that *without a Parable spake he not unto them, i. e.* his Disciples. Now every Tragedy hath its Fable or Parable, which is the same, and every Parable its moral Instruction, for that is the End of all Fables, as I have already instanced in the Tragedies of *Oedipus, Ajax, Antigone, &c.* For they are not told as Truths, nor doth the Poet design to impose his Fictions on the World as such; yet though they are not in themselves true, the
Appli-

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Application and moral Instruction which they design, is most undoubtedly so: If Anger destroyed *Thyestes*, *Ajax*, and others, Rashness and Curiosity *Oedipus*, the sad Effects of Jealousie *Deianira*, and Severity *Creon*, we may reasonably conclude in the ordinary Course of Things, that where the same Passions prevail, they will always have the same Effects. And although there had been really no such Persons in the World as are here mentioned, yet the Application is general to all; and it is most probable that Persons of such Manners should do such Actions, and that such Actions should produce such Consequences. Now if Men who are Slaves to their Passions, and abandoned in their Morals, can be reclaimed, what matters it whether it be done by a Poet or Divine? If a cruel persecuting Tyrant is reformed, and becomes a pious Prince, careful for the Welfare of his People; what

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matters it whether it be done by hearing a Tragedy of the terrible Sufferings of a People under a tyrannous Government; or by hearing a Sermon, setting forth how God is merciful to all his Creatures in general, and that he requires the same Temper in Men toward their fellow Creatures, and the Punishment which waits the opposite Vice in a future State, &c. As to the latter I am aware of an Objection, that there is a Duty in the very Act of hearing Sermons, which is not in the other: I grant it; yet that Hearing is in Order to a better End, *viz.* to be instructed in the Will of God, and the Way of our Duty, *Rom. x. v. 14. &c.* But if Hearing doth not answer that End, it will be so far from standing us in any Stead in the Day of Account, that it will rather be an Aggravation of the Condemnation of such stony Hearts, in which the good Seed of the Word was sown in vain: And if
hearing

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hearing a Tragedy hath often wrought the Minds of Men to that Christian Temper, which Preaching could not, I see not why the Use of so good a Help is not both lawful and commendable.

The Usefulness of this Diversion will farther appear, if we look back and trace it from its Original, and consider the Design for which it was first invented, *viz.* to afford Pleasure and Profit to its Hearers. When the Philosophers found that it was impossible for them to form Men, such as they would have them to be, by the Precepts of Philosophy, they were forced to have Recourse to Tragedy; which was therefore invented, not as the best Employment that Men could take up, but as a Means to correct the Excess in which they plunged themselves at their Feasts; and to render those Amusements profitable, which Custom and their Infirmities had made necessary, and their Corruption

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ruption very dangerous. So that Tragedy was designed both to satisfy the natural Curiosity of Men, and that Inclination which all have to gratify themselves with some kind of Recreation, and at the same Time to instruct them; and that very Reason that it doth so, is sufficient to justify the Use of it. Moderate Recreations are by no Means unlawful, or contrary to the Word of God, but rather authorized by it. God did not give Men Inclinations but such only, the gratifying of which are lawful, provided they regulate themselves by the Measures of Prudence and Sobriety; and it were heartily to be wished that those Libertines who complain of the Yoke of Religion, would, instead of their customary criminal Indulgence of their Passions, betake themselves to this kind of Diversion.

The other Objection against Tragick Poetry is, that it is very much abused.

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abused. This must certainly be granted; yet this Objection, however true, cannot lie against what I here contend for; since, as I said before, I would be here understood to mean only such Tragedies as are built upon the Plan of the Antients, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, and according to those Rules down laid by *Aristotle* and *Horace*; not such abominable Stuff, as our *English* Theatres have been crowded with since their Times, where the Spectators have been entertained with tedious Scenes of Courtship, abusive Language to the Clergy, ridiculous Contradictions, abominable Fustian; yea, we have Instances of their prophane Flights of Thought, little better than Blasphemy. These were Faults which *Dryden*, and *Lee* fell into, who have been followed herein by several other Poets since their Time, for which they are justly, though severely scourged by the ingenious Mr. *Collier*. What an abominable

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bominable Character doth *Dryden* give us of *Nourmahal*, in that Scene where she discovers her unnatural Love for *Aurengezeb*? How doth she talk like a Woman lost to all Shame and Modesty? The Antients never ran into Errors of this Nature, for though *Phædra* in *Euripides* is in Love with *Hippolytus*, yet her Honour throughout the whole Play, so far prevails over her Love, that it ties her Tongue from the least immodest Expression.

Shakespear, however faulty in other Things, yet had none of this; we do not find his Plays stuffed with any such tender Sentiments between the different Sex before Marriage, which must be shocking and uneasy to the fair Sex, and offensive to that Modesty which is no less an Ornament to them than their Beauty. *Juliet* and *Desdemona* are both married, before they make any Acknowledgments,

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ments of their Love. We have likewise Passages in several of their Pieces, where they abuse the Clergy with most insolent Language, of which the Behaviour of *Chamont* to the Chaplain, in that celebrated Play called the *Orphan*, is one Instance, and that of *Oedipus* in *Dryden's* Play of that Title, toward *Tiresias*, is another: Where the Poets have with most impudent Language abused, not only those Persons, namely, the Chaplain and *Tiresias* in Particular, but even railed against the sacred Function in general. If it be not raking from too foul a Channel, I shall cite the Passages from the Authors. *Oedipus*. ACT III.

Oed. *Who were my Parents?*

Tir. *Thou shalt know too soon.*

Oed. *Why seek I Truth from thee?*

*The Smiles of Courtiers, and the
Harlot's Tears,*

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*The Tradesmens Oaths and Mourning of an Heir,
Are Truths to what Priests tell.
O why hast Priesthood Privilege to
lie,
And yet to be believed?*

And in the *Orphan*, Act III. *Chamont* says to the Chaplain.

*Nay, but th'art an Hypocrite; is
there not one
Of all thy Tribe that's honest in your
Schools?*

And afterwards.

*If thou would'st have me not contemn
thy Office
And Character, think all thy Bre-
thren Knaves,
Thy Trade a Cheat, and thou its
worst Professor.*

Afterwards *Chamont* seeing the Meekness of the Chaplain, in bearing this Language without shewing any great Signs of Resentment, returns to his
former

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former Style, and reproaches him with the most vile, the most scurrilous Language that Impudence and Rage could dictate.

*Curse on that formal steddý Villain's
Face.*

*Just so do all Bawds look, nay,
Bawds, they say,
Can pray upon Occasion, talk of
Heaven,
Turn up their gogling Eyeballs, rail
at Vice,
Dissemble, lie and preach like any
Priest.
Art thou a Bawd?*

But it were needless to produce a few Passages of this Kind, and those only to be found in the Writings of Authors long since dead, were not their Example too closely followed by the Author of a Play too well known, and frequented too, to be named here; to the Shame of the corrupted Taste of our Nation, and Dis-
relish

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relish of the admirable Beauties of the Antients.

The Lawyer beknaves the Divine, &c.

And now let any Man judge, whether it be fit that Men in holy Orders, to whom are committed the Oracles of God, whose particular Business it is to promote the Honour of God, and set forward the Salvation of all Men, should be treated with such Language. And I believe all Men will allow, that there is no more effectual Way to serve the Causes of the Atheist and Infidel, and to bring Religion into Contempt, than to infuse into Mens Minds a Contempt of its Teachers.

These and such like Abuses, brought this Scandal upon all Dramatick Writings in General, that they were only invented by the Poets to get Money, and enrich themselves by the Follies and Vices of Mankind. But what can be more unjust than to banish the true Coins out of the World, because

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cause of Counterfeits? For such are certainly that kind of Tragedy I have now mention'd; with respect to what is truly and properly so call'd.

Is it an Argument that we should never follow the Directions of a skilful Physician, because some ignorant Pretenders have kill'd their Patients by Medicines improper for their Disease? This was not because they were Physicians; but because they were nothing less. And yet just so much Reason have we to reject the Use of right Tragedy, because it hath been abus'd and perverted to base Ends. For nothing can be more opposite to right Tragedy than what ignorant Poetafters have impos'd on the World as such; nor can any Thing be more unjust than to condemn it, for no other Reason but because of that Abuse; and those who do, condemn the most noble Diversion in the World, a Diversion which awakens the Genius of Men,

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searches

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searches to the inmost Recesses of the Soul, finds out those Virtues which lay hid in the smooth Seasons and Calms of Life, and sets them upon Actions truly noble and Praiseworthy. It touches the most obdurate Soul; and makes it melt to behold the Sufferings of our fellow Creatures. I could give many Proofs of this Truth, but shall at present only trouble the Reader with the following.

Alexander, a cruel Tyrant of *Phæra* in *Thessaly*, being at the Theatre when the *Hecuba* of *Euripides* was acted, was so sensibly mov'd, that he went out before the first Act was ended, saying, he was asham'd to be seen to weep at the Misfortunes of *Hecuba* and *Polyxena*, when he daily imbrued his Hands in the Blood of his Citizens. He was afraid that if he stay'd longer his Heart would be mollify'd, and forced to quit that Spirit of Tyranny which was destruc-

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ative to so many of his Citizens:
And the Actor escap'd with his Life
only through those small Remains of
Pity he had rais'd in his Breast,
who had been so long a Stranger to
it. *Collier* himself, who was so vio-
lent a Scourge of dramattick Poetry,
yet allows it to be the most useful
Thing the Wit of Man can invent,
for the promoting of Virtue and the
Discouragement of Vice, And cer-
tainly if ever any hath been writ
without respect to this End, either
the Avarice, Ignorance or Laziness
of the Poets have been the Occa-
sion of it, and not any Defect in the
Art itself.

But it is Time that I speak in par-
ticular of the Tragedies of the An-
cients, since they are the true Mo-
dels according to which every good
Tragedian ought to write, as being
not only according to *Aristotle's*
Rules, but even those upon which
he grounded his Rules; that is, in
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the State Tragick Poetry was left by *Thespis*. In Prosecution of which Design, I shall give my Reader a short Account of its Rise and Progress, and what Improvements it gradually receiv'd until it arriv'd at that Perfection to which it was brought by *Sophocles*; and from thence shew what Vicissitudes it underwent, sometimes being eclipsed, and again recovering its ancient Lustre, until the later Ages.

Then I shall mark out the particular Excellencies for which the three great Heroes of Tragick Poetry, namely *Æschylus*, *Euripides* and *Sophocles*, are most eminent; and the Faults for which they are most defective: And upon the whole shew, that the Preference to the other two is due to *Sophocles*.

I shall begin with the Derivation of the Word Tragedy. Tragedy is a Word compounded of two Greek Words *τραῖος* and *ᾠδή*, a Goat and a Song

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Song, and it was sung at a Feast which was kept in Honour of *Bacchus*, he being the first Planter of Vines in *Attica*. At this Feast a Goat was sacrificed, and the Reward given to that Person who sang best was a Goat. Whence *Horace*,

*Carminē qui Tragico vilem certavit
ob Hircum.*

Who sung a Tragick Song for a vile Goat.

Then to these Songs there were other Additions made, which improved them to Dialogues, between two or more: Hence proceeded Dramatick Poetry, both Comick and Tragick; so that there were some Tragedians of smaller Account before *Thespis*; and Mr. *Boileau* was mistaken in ascribing the first Invention of this Art to that Tragedian. What Improvements he and *Æschylus* afterwards made, *Horace* tells us in these following Lines.

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Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ

Dicitur, & Plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis,

*Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti
sæcibus ora.*

*Post hunc personæ pallæque reperi-
tor honestæ*

*Æschylus, & modicis instravit pul-
pita tignis,*

*Et docuit magnumque loqui, niti-
que Cothurno.*

Thespis is said to be the first found
out

The Tragedy, and carried it a-
bout,

Till then unknown, in Carts,
wherein did ride

Those that did sing, and act:
their Faces dy'd

With Lees of Wine. Next *Æ-
schylus* more late

Brought in the Visor, and the
Robe of State,

Built

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Built a small timber'd Stage, and
taught them Talk
Lofty and great; and in the Bus-
kin walk.

Ben Johnson's Hor.

So that at first there was only a *Chorus* who acted alone, afterwards *Theſpis* in order to give some Rest to the *Chorus*, added another Person, and *Æschylus* a second; one of which was to be the chief Character, and the other a Dependant or Retinue to him; and in order to give the more room to the Dialogue between the two Actors, retrenched the Length of the Songs of the *Chorus*. Lastly, *Sophocles* having more narrowly examined the Nature of Tragedy, and finding that *Æschylus's* two Actors did not set off the Scene well, and could not give an Opportunity of such a Variety of Plots and Contrivances as ought to be there, reduced the Songs of the *Chorus* to their just

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Bounds,

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Bounds, which *Æschylus* had shor-
ten'd too much, and added a third,
and there all the *Greek* Tragedians
remained. And tho' *Æschylus* both
in his *Choëphori* and *Eumenides* has
three Actors talking together, yet it
was because he had made those
Plays twelve Years after he had seen
some of *Sophocles's* Pieces, from which
he took his third Actor: And there-
fore *Horace* lays down this Rule:

Nec quarta loqui persona laboret.

Nor strive to make a fourth Per-
son speak.

And indeed if we rightly consider
the Nature of Dialogue, we shall find
that there can happen few Cases
wherein it shall be necessary for a-
bove three Persons together to speak,
altho' four Persons and more, to give
Beauty and Majesty to a Scene may
be admitted.

Thus I have given my Readers a
short Account of the Rise and Pro-
gress

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gress of Tragedy, until the Time of *Sophocles*, when it was brought to that Perfection, that *Aristotle* would not resolve this Question, whether any Thing more could be added to it? After *Sophocles's* Time, as Princes smiled upon, or slighted this and other Arts and Sciences, so this Art underwent many Changes from better to worse, and the contrary. Under the Reigns of *Alexander*, the Son of *Amyntas*, *Perdiccas*, and *Archelaus*, it flourished and was in great Reputation; but in the following Reigns it languish'd. Then again, under the Reigns of *Philip* and *Alexander*, those glorious Princes so dispensed their Favours to the Poets, that they again brought it to its flourishing State. After the Death of *Alexander* it began again to fade, and never recover'd its Strength till the Reign of *Augustus*, a Prince, who, how much he was renowned for his great Encouragement of this as well as all other

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ther kinds of Poetry, it is very well known, and the Poets rewarded him for his Favours by immortal Monuments of his Worth; but *Horace* in particular, who sang his Praise in the most beautiful Odes that the most excellent Spirit of Poetry could possibly dictate. After the Death of *Augustus* for more than sixteen hundred Years, it grew feeble till the last Age, when it was recover'd out of its almost lost State by M. *Corneille* and *Racine*, both *Frenchmen*.

But to come to the Writers of our own Nation, the divine *Shakespear* was the first who began this Art among us, and indeed who ended it too, for he has gain'd so much Praise in it, that he hath scarce left any for those who come after him: And he is so much the more to be admir'd, because he perform'd what he did without the Help of Learning; nor indeed did he need it, he could look within himself, and there find all the
Images

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Images of Nature perfectly painted. And *Ben Johnson* and *Fletcher* who were his Contemporaries, tho' their Plots were generally more regular, yet the Age in which they lived never esteemed them equal with him. As for Mr. *Dryden*, Dramatick Poetry was not his Talent, tho' in one of his Pieces, *viz. The World well lost*, he so well joins the Regularity of *Ben Johnson* with the Wit of *Shakespear*, that I know not whether it be not the best of all his Writings of that kind. Nor must we forget the ingenious Mr. *Addison*, whose *Cato*, if we consider the Charms of its Phrase, the Soundness of its moral Instructions, the Exactness of its Characters, if it doth not exceed, yet certainly it is equal to any Thing that Antiquity can produce. Where we may observe by the Way, how good and necessary the Favour and Encouragement of Princes is for the Improvement and Perfection of Arts;
and

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and how all Princes who ever encouraged them, thought not this Art in particular unworthy of their distinguishing Smiles. And if it is possible for it to arise yet to a higher Perfection, nothing of that Nature is not to be hoped for under the auspicious Smiles of so gracious a Prince as now sways the Sceptre of these Realms; who, among the many excellent Virtues by which he has distinguish'd himself from his Royal Ancestors, this is none of the least, namely, his generous Love of Learning, discover'd by his bounteous Encouragement of the Learned, and the many Books which his Majesty is pleased to patronize, whose Praise being unequal to so noble a Theme, I shall leave to more skilful Pens,

Nec conemur, tenues, grandia.

Having now given the Reader a short History of Tragedy from its first Infancy to our present Times; I
now

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now return to the Tragedy of the Ancients, where I shall mark out the chief Excellencies for which they are all most eminent, and the Faults for which they are most defective, and upon the Comparison shew, that of the three *Greek* Tragedians, the Preference is due to *Sophocles*.

I shall begin with the Definition of perfect Tragedy, and then repeat some of the Laws of most Import of Tragick Poetry, according to which I shall examine them.

Tragedy then is the Imitation of an Action that is grave, entire, and hath a just Length, of which the Style is agreeably relishing, but differently in all its Parts, and which without the Assistance of Narration, by means of Compassion and Terror, perfectly refines in us all Sorts of Passion, and whatever else is like them.

The Imitation of an Action is the Fable, the Manners are what distinguish

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guish the Quality of the Action, and the Sentiments are the Discourses by which they make known every Action, and discover their Thoughts. Tragedy therefore consists of four essential Parts, *viz.* Fable, Manners, Diction, and Sentiments. As for Decoration and Musick they are only added to make the Tragedy more agreeable and diverting, and are not at all essential to it. They are not properly the Business of the Poet, but belong to other Persons employed in the Business of the Theatre, tho' *Æschylus* placed much Stress in Decoration, for he chose every Thing that was frightful.

Horror and Death were in his Paintings seen.

First as to the Fable, the Composition of Causes and Incidents which concur to the making up an Action is the Fable, in which is to be observ'd Unity of these three Things, *viz.*
Time,

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Time, Place and Action: For as Tragedy is the Imitation of one Action, so the Fable or Imitation ought not to exceed the Thing imitated. The same may be said of the Unity of Time and Place. These last *Sophocles* observes admirably well, the longest of all the Actions he imitates takes not up above four Hours. That in the *Trachiniae* seems to be the longest in any of his Pieces, for the Time which *Hyllus* is supposed to take in going from *Trachinium* to Mount *Oeta* which was near it, seems to be something considerable, and a little more than could well be done in the Time of Representation, yet this is what may very well be allow'd of, so little Time may well be cast into the Intervals of Action and not be discerned by Spectators, who will not pry so narrowly as to discern any Absurdity in it: This is far short of that Liberty which some of the Moderns have taken in this kind, for they will
represent

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represent you Actions which cannot possibly be done in less than three or four Days. How absurd is it to suppose an Army to march during the Time of Action to a certain Place of forty or fifty Miles Distance, where they revolt from their Leaders, and the latter are brought in Prisoners to the Place of Action? And yet this is an Oversight which a great Poet of this Age has been guilty of. Every Imitation is more perfect as it is more like the Thing imitated. Tragedy is the Imitation or Representation of an Action, therefore it necessarily follows that the nearer the Time of Action comes to the Representation of that Action, the more perfect the Tragedy will be. So far were the Ancients persuaded of the Necessity of observing this Rule, that *Euripides* in his *Suppliants*, and *Æschylus* in his *Agamemnon*, had rather incur some Absurdity than transgress it.

Unity

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Unity of Place our Author likewise observes every where, a Rule which *Shakespear* every where, and other Moderns, often transgress. But as to that of Action, particularly in his Tragedy of *Ajax*, he is not so exact; great Part of which Play consists of a Dispute between *Teucrus* and the *Grecian* Chiefs whether the Body of *Ajax* shall be buried or not, which is a Transgression of this Rule.

As to the Manners, a good Poet ought to take Care they be such as render the Action credible and probable, and such as will let us see what they have actually determined to do in any important and difficult Case, before they do it. It is true, no Action can be without Manners, but they are not such for the most Part, as necessarily or probably determine the Persons to such particular Actions. For Instance, when *Agamemnon* sent Ambassadors to *Achilles* in *Homer*, we can judge what will be the Consequence of this Embassy,

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bassy, by what the Poet hath told us of that Heroe. It is the same with *Sophocles*, all which the Poet says of the Character of *Oedipus*, prepares us for his extravagant Passions, and teaches us to judge what Excess, his blind Obstinacy will make him commit.

On the other Hand, *Aristotle* hath shewn us where *Euripides* hath offended in the Goodness and Equality of Manners: For Instance, the Manners of *Menelaus* in his *Orestes* are bad; *Menelaus* arrived at *Argos* just as they were going to condemn *Orestes* to Death, and *Orestes* hopes that the Arrival of his Uncle would secure him from Danger. The Manners which *Euripides* then gives him, would makes us think that he would not forsake his Nephew; for he says that his Calamity and Distress obliged him to take the more Care of him; and when *Tyndarus* press'd to have the Prince executed, that he might revenge the Death of his Daughter *Clytemnestra*,
he

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he tells him that his long Stay among the *Barbarians* had made him one too. *Menelaus* answers, that he acted in that according to the *Grecian* Education, who always had great Considerations for their Relations, and thought themselves obliged to do them all possible Service: Nay, he was so transported as to tell *Tyndarus*, that Anger and old Age had made him a Fool. Thus are the Manners of *Menelaus* well denoted, all that he says is a moral Speech, and seems to intimate that he will take a Resolution agreeable to them: But this is contradicted the next Moment, for *Menelaus* being terrified at *Tyndarus* his Threats, becomes at once very fearful, and, Coward-like, abandons his Nephew. The Manners of *Iphigenia* at *Aulis*, are likewise very bad; for (saith *Aristotle*) the suppliant *Iphigenia*, whom we see at the Beginning, is not that couragious *Iphigenia*, whom we see at the End. At first she prays in

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a most slavish Manner to her Father not to deliver her up to Death, and makes a Thousand pitiful Complaints; and presently after, who is more courageous? Who more in Love with Glory? Yea, she begs of her Mother, that she would let her dye for the Safety of the *Greeks*.

How far are these from the Manners *Sophocles* gives *Antigone*? For she dies with the same Resolution and Magnanimity with which she at first transgressed that impious Decree of *Creon*, and she appears throughout the whole Piece the same *Antigone*. His Sentiments which denote those Manners, are here, and every where else in his Pieces, agreeable to Truth or Similitude. As to Diction, it is of so small Importance, that a Tragedy is really perfect and entire without it; and however flat it be, yet it doth not make the other less perfect. In that our Author imitates *Homer*, from whom he borrows many Expressions

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as well as Sentiments; but this I shall have Occasion to speak of hereafter.

His Fables are most of them of the Implex Kind, *i. e.* such as are unravelled, either by a Change of Fortune alone, as the *Antigone*, or Remembrance alone, as the *Electra*; or lastly, both by a Remembrance and Change of Fortune, as the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and *Trachiniae*; But the *Ajax*, *Oedipus Coloneus*, and *Philoctetes*, are of the Simple Kind, *i. e.* such whose unravelling is only a single Passage of Agitation and Trouble; and the most perfect Tragedy of either Kind, is that which hath only a single *Catastrophe*, *i. e.* which exposeth the Sufferings of one single Person, who being neither good nor bad in the superlative Degree, doth not draw on him his Sufferings by his Crimes, as in the *Oedipus*.

Euripides in most of his Pieces has observed this Rule, for which Reason he was called the most tragical of all
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the Poets, tho' otherwise he was not so correct as *Sophocles*.

His Manners (as has been shewn before) are very unequal; the Songs of his *Chorus* are sometimes foreign to the Subject in Hand, an Error which *Sophocles* never ran into contrary to that Rule of *Horace*,

*Nec quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non proposito conducat & hæ-
reat apte.*

For nothing we between the Acts
should see,
But with the Play exactly will agree.

Now tho' the most perfect Sort of Tragedy be that whose *Catastrophes* are single, as in *Oedipus*, which exposes the Unhappiness of one Man, who is less wicked than good; and not double as the *Electra*, whose *Catastrophe* is fortunate for the Good, and unhappy for the Bad; yet there have been many Pieces which have succeeded tolerably well, as the *Philoctetes*

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Isætes of *Sophocles*, the *Suppliants* of *Æschylus*, *Heraclides*, *Helena*, and *Ion* of *Euripides*: Yet were they far from that Perfection which *Aristotle* requires, nor did the Success of them last so long, as of those which were composed according to the former Rule. Yet every one of the *Greek* Tragedians in their different Ways, have discovered a singular Majesty in their Art.

This is what *Cicero* hath observed in his third Book *de Oratore*. *Quam inter se Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, dissimiles sint; Quanquam omnibus par pene laus in dissimili scribendi genere tribuatur.* How different are *Æschylus*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides* from one another; and yet they all deserve almost equal Praise, in their different Ways of Writing.

Æschylus succeeded very well in his simple Tragedies, *i. e.* those which expose to View the Unhappiness of one

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particular Person, as his *Prometheus*, and his Seven Captains of *Thebes*: But was not so good at his Implex, as his *Agamemnon* and *Choëphori*. On the other Hand, *Euripides*, tho' he succeeded very well in his Implex Pieces, yet his chief Excellence consisted in his Moral, *i. e.* those which expose to View the Happiness of some Person: Which, tho' they be opposite to the Rule above-mentioned, which *Aristotle* hath laid down for the Composition of perfect Tragedy, yet there he mixeth the Passions so admirably well, that they are preferable to those whose Catastrophes are unfortunate, notwithstanding these are more tragical than the other.

But *Sophocles* in his Implex Pieces, *i. e.* his *Oedipus*, *Electra*, &c. excelled them all; for which, as well as as his other Excellencies, we may conclude he is the best of all the *Greek* Tragedians. For his Excellency in general, he is commended both by Antients and

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and Moderns. *Virgil*, comparing the Tragedies of *Pollio* to those of *Sophocles*, has these Words:

*En erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per
Orbem,
Sola Sophocleo tua Carmina digna
Cothurno.*

Polemon calls him *Homerus Tragicus*, the tragick *Homer*, as *Diogenes*, *Laertius* witnesseth, *Lib. IV.* And if we may believe the same Author, he was furnamed *Apis*, i. e. a Bee, for the Sweetness of his Language.

He was perfectly acquainted with the Writings of *Homer*, to whom he is indebted for the unravelling of the *Electra*, which was borrowed from that of the *Odysssey*, where *Penelope* laments for *Ulysses* who was present with her, whom she supposed to be absent, and who is soon discovered to her.

His Description of the Chariot-Course in the same Piece, is a perfect Imitation of that which *Homer* gives of
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of the Chariot-Course, wherewith *Achilles* honoured the Funeral of *Patroclus* in the 23d *Iliad*. The Character of *Pyrrhus* in the *Philoctetes*, is drawn according to the Notion the Poet had of his Father *Achilles*, as his Character is represented in *Homer*; for he hath given him some of his Manners, viz. that he scorned to stoop to so mean an Action as to deceive *Philoctetes* with a Lye, tho' it were for his Advantage; and tho' at first he condescended to it, his Mind could not be at Rest, till he had made Reparation for it. And *Homer* represents *Achilles* saying,

Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς αἶδαο πύλῃσιν
 "Ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ Φρεσὶν, ἄλ-
 λο δὲ βάζει. Iliad ι.

His Character of *Thersites* is taken from the second *Iliad*, where likewise *Ulysses* is introduced rebuking and beating him for his sawcy Language to *Agamemnon*. And it were no difficult Matter

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Matter to instance, where he useth *Homer's* Thoughts and Expressions; and his so exact Imitation of *Homer*, is the Reason why he is so inimitable himself. Mr. *Boileau*, in a particular Place, where he is about giving us the History of Tragedy, hath these following Lines in his Commendation.

*Then Sophocles the Genius of his Age,
Increas'd the Pomp and Beauty of
the Stage,
Engag'd the Chorus' Song in every
Part,
And polish'd rugged Verse by Rules
of Art.
He in the Greek did those Perfections
gain,
Which the weak Latins never could
attain.*

Mr. *Dryden*, speaking of the Tragedy of *Oedipus* in particular says, *Sophocles* indeed is admirable every where, and in his Prologue to his *Oedipus*:

When

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*When Athens all the Grecian State
did guide,
And Greece gave Laws to all the
World beside ;
Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit
Supreme, in Wisdom one, and one in
Wit.*

These Testimonies are sufficient to shew the Reputation *Sophocles* had before our Times, and how he ought always to be esteemed by Persons of the most sound Judgment, and refined Taste for polite Learning: And Pity it is that of the hundred and twenty Tragedies that admirable Tragedian wrote, the Injury of Time has deprived us of all, except these Seven.

This therefore may suffice to have been said concerning *Sophocles's* Tragedies, both because I here only design to give the Reader a general Account of what I thought proper to be known before the Reading of them, and not to lay down all the Rules of an Art, of which there are so many excel-

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excellent Treatises extant: As *Aristotle* with Mr. *Dacier's* Notes, Mr. *Gildon*, *Gerard Vossius*, &c. And because I have in my Notes pointed out in their proper Places, what I thought most worthy my Observation.

In my Translation I have endeavoured to avoid as much as possible these two Extrems; *i. e.* neither by aiming at too florid a Style to deviate too far from the Original, nor yet by keeping too close to the Original, (which *Horace* calls too faithfully translating) render the Phrase too low and bald; that by that Means it might be helpful to the Learners of the *Greek* Language, as well as others. And to that End I had, thro' the whole Course of this Work, those Words of *Horace* in my Mind:

*Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere
fidus.*

And a little after,

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Ne — — —

*Migret in obscuras humili sermone
Tabernas;*

*Aut dum vitat humum, nubes & inania
captet.*

And those of the learned and Reverend Doctor *Pearce*, in the Preface to his excellent Edition of *Longinus*, only changing the Word *Latina* into *Anglicana*.

Velim Interpretem fidum esse, non sui Ostentatorem: Sit modo dictio ejus Anglicana, sint verba sensum Græci Authoris clare breviterque exprimentia, non quæro an versio ornatum præ se ferat, i. e. I would have an Interpreter be faithful, not a Boaster of his Art; let but his Diction be good *English*, clearly and shortly expressing the Sense of the *Greek* Author; I desire not that his Version be full of fine Language.

In my Notes I have not scrupled to make bold with some of Mr. *Dacier's*

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Remarks upon *Aristotle*, Doctor *Porter's* *Archæologia Græca*, and other Authors, when I found them conducive to my Purpose. Yet most of the Notes are my own, and if I have made upon any Passage some Remarks which have been made before, I either inform the Reader of it, if I know it; and if not, it is purely accidental that I happen to have the same Thoughts with others concerning the same Thing.

As to this Performance, if the Reader finds in it any Faults,

— *Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit Natura,*

I hope in his own Humanity, he will not aggravate or insist upon them to my Condemnation. I have made it my Endeavour every where to give the true Sense of my Author, and if therein I have failed, it
is

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is no more than what others have done before me in Works of this Nature, who are much my Superiors; and that too, without the Fault of them, but of the Editors, and false Glosses of Commentators.



THE

THE
TRAGEDY
OF
ALEXANDER.

B

Dramatis Personæ.

Minerva.

Ulyssès.

Ajax.

Teucrus.

Menelaus }
Agamemnon } The two *Atridæ.*

Tecmessa, *Ajax's* Captive, whom he married.

Euryfaces, *Ajax's* Son by *Tecmessa*.

A Messenger from *Teucrus*.

Two Semi-chorus's.

Chorus of *Salaminian* Sailors.

SCENE, The *Grecian* Camp before *Troy*,
near the Tent of *Ajax*.



A J A X.

The ARGUMENT.

AFTER the Death of Achilles, Ajax and Ulysses contending for his Armour, the Matter was refer'd to the other Grecian Chiefs, who adjudged it to the latter, as the worthier of the two. Whereupon Ajax fir'd with Rage at this Indignity, resolv'd to satisfy his Revenge by killing those, as he thought, corrupt Judges. But being by the Goddess Minerva struck with Madness for his Contempt of her Assistance, he turns all his Rage against the Flocks and Herds which the Grecians had taken from the Trojans, and their Keepers, killing and wounding them in a most ridiculously barbarous Manner; thinking all the Time that he used the

Atridæ so. But when he came to himself, and consider'd the Action as it really was, ridiculous and mean, and unworthy the Glory of his own and Father's Name, the Grief and Shame thereof drove him to Despair, and that to murther himself.

This Subject hath employ'd the Pens of several Tragedians before Sophocles; as Æschylus, who wrote a Tragedy upon it, whose Title was the Judgment of Arms; and among the Romans, Pacuvius and Accius, and this of Sophocles is only a Sequel of the same Subject.

For the Nature of this Tragedy it is Simple, in opposition to Implexa, that is, it continues from the Beginning to the End without any Change of Fortune; for as Ajax at the beginning of it is in Grief for what he had done, so it ends with his Death and Burial.





ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Grecian Camp near the Tent of Ajax,
where Ulysses stands prying about it, and
the Voice of Minerva is heard in the Air.*

Min.



^a Son of ^b Laertes, I have al-
ways found thee with ^c watch-
ful Eyes, prevent those Plots
thy Enemies have formed, and

^a *O Son, &c.*] The Occasion of *Minerva's* Appearance here is very important, and worthy the Presence of a Deity, namely to inform *Ulysses* of what had been done by *Ajax* the Night before in his Madness; which it was impossible should be known without divine Assistance: For which Reason it is every way agreeable to *Horace's* Rule.

*Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus Vindice Nodus
Inciderit.*

Yet if the Goddess could have contriv'd some other Way to discover this Action to *Ulysses*, which she might certainly have done, I am afraid *Aristotle's* Rule will be against him, *Art. Poet. cap. 16.* "The unravel-
"ling of the Subject (saith he) ought to be taken
"from the Subject itself, without making Use of any
"Machine; or if it be made use of, it ought to be
"out of the Action of the Tragedy; either to ex-
"plain some Things which happened before, and
"which it is impossible for Man to know, or, to in-
"form of something which will happen, concerning

turn them on their impious Authors Heads:
And now I see thee among the naval Tents

“ which it is necessary to be instructed.” For it was possible that *Ulysses* by the Terror of some frightful Dream sent by the Goddess might rise up and surprize *Ajax* in the very Fact; as Queen *Atossa* by such a Terror met the Lords of *Susa* after *Xerxes’s* Defeat, or *Ulysses* according to his usual Manners being watchful against Dangers might have seen him by Accident, yet such as the Goddess might be suppos’d to have contriv’d; if either of these, or any other Way might have been contriv’d, without her personal Appearance, then *Sophocles*, according to *Aristotle*, hath fail’d. Yet (as Mr. *Dacier* observes) *Aristotle* was too severe; for, says he, if the Presence of a Deity be absolutely necessary for the unravelling a Plot, I see no Reason why it should not be used although it be in the Action: And we shall find but very few Pieces among the Ancients managed according to this Rule, not even the *Iphigenia Taurica*, *Helena*, *Ion*, and *Electra* of *Euripides*. For which Reason *Horace* moderated this Rule, and was content to say, *Nec Deus interfit, &c.*

^b O Son of *Laertes*.] *Ulysses* was the suppos’d Son of *Laertes* King of *Ithaca*, a Countrey in *Greece*, and very much fam’d for his Wisdom and other Virtues, according to *Horace*, *Ep. 2. Lib. 1.*

*Rursus, quid Virtus & quid Sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssæm.*

He was the best of all the *Grecian* Commanders except *Achilles*, but according to *Ulysses* himself, *Ajax* was likewise his Superior, tho’ that might be said by him out of Modesty, for it is plain the other *Grecian* Chiefs thought not so.

^c With watchful Eyes.] Gr. *ὑπερῶς*, as hunting, a Metaphor taken from the Practice of Sportsmen, to find out their Game by Tract and Scent of Dogs. This figurative Expression denotes the Diligence of *Ulysses* in finding out the Authors of the Slaughter.

of *Ajax*, where he keeps the outmost Guards, searching and tracing his newly impressed Steps, to see whether he be within or not; thy Search of him is certain as a *Spartan* Hound's Scent of the Game. The Man is now within, the Sweat drops from his Head, and murdering Hands. Thou hast no Business to look in at the Gate, but to tell on what Account thou searchest thus diligently, that thou mayest hear of me who know all the Truth.

Ulys. O Voice of *Minerva*, well known to me tho' thou art not seen, most kind to me of all the Goddesses, I both hear thy Voice, and well discern it; for as the sound of a brazen mouthed ^d *Tyrrhene* Trumpet surpasseth all others, so doth thy Voice most delightful salute my Ears. And now you know I walk here on Account of ^e valiant *Ajax*, for him and none else I fought out long: And this Night he hath done a secret Act, but how it was done we are not certain,

^d *Tyrrhene Trumpet.*] It was so call'd because it was invented by the *Tyrrhenians*, from whom it was communicated to the *Grecians* by one *Arichondas*, who came to assist the Posterity of *Hercules*: Others attribute the Invention of it to *Tyrrhenus*, Son of *Hercules*. Its Orifice was cleft, and it sent out an exceeding loud and shrill Sound. Therefore *Ulysses* here compares it to the Goddess *Minerva's* Voice.

^e *Valiant Ajax.*] The Greek is "Αἶαντι τῷ Καταφύγεσσι, this Epithet was peculiar to *Ajax* according to *Homer*, who hath "Αἶας φέρον σάκος, *Ajax who beareth a Shield*.

but still wander in doubtfulness; and willingly I undertook this Work, for we now find all our Prey destroyed and killed by Hands with the Keepers of the Flock: ^f Every one lays the Fault on him, and a certain Spy hath declar'd that he saw him skipping over the Fields, with his Sword dropping with Blood which he had newly shed. Immediately I follow'd those Steps, and some Reasons induce me to charge the Fault on him, but others make me doubt, so that I cannot certainly understand whose Deeds these were, but thou art come in Season to my Aid; for in every Enterprize I take in Hand, I am directed by thy Governance.

Min. I know it, *Ulysses*; and therefore went out in thy Way, to be assisting to thee in thy Search.

Ulyf. And, dear Goddess, do I undertake this Labour to good Purpose?

Min. Yes, since the Actions of this Man concern thee.

Ulyf. And why hath he put his Hand to so unaccountable an Action?

^f *Every one lays the Fault.]* Here is an Instance of the extraordinary Justice of *Ulysses*, that he was unwilling to believe what was charged against *Ajax*, without the clearest Evidence: For he was so amaz'd at so unexpected a Report, that he could not believe it without the positive Information of the Goddess.

Min.

Min. Being incensed with Anger for the Arms of *Achilles*.

Ulys. But why doth he offer Violence to Flocks?

Min. Thinking that in your Blood he imbrues his murdering Hand.

Ulys. And is that his Design, doth he think he commits this Slaughter on the *Grecians*?

Min. And he had perfected it, but for my Care.

Ulys. But with what Impudence fraught, and Boldness of Mind dare he commit that Action?

Min. A treacherous Night-Wanderer, alone he rushed upon you.

Ulys. Was he near us?

Min. At the Door of the General's Tent.

Ulys. How did he restrain his raging Hand from Murther?

Min. It was I who quelled his Transports of Joy, and cast before his Eyes a Mist that he could not discern right from wrong, and so I turned all his Rage against the Flocks, and Cattle, a promiscuous Prey, which the Herdsmen kept together, where falling on, he made a Slaughter among the horned Cattle, killing all round, and thought that with his own Hand he killed the two *Atridæ*; and that he rushed now upon one of the Commanders, now upon another: But I coming, push'd on the furious Man with a mad Disease, into inextricable Ills; and after
when

when he ceased from Slaughter, binding again some living Oxen with Chains, he brings them into his Tent, as if they were so many Men, and not a Prey of horned Cattle, and now within the Tent he scourgeth them. But I will shew thee evident Signs of his Disease, that when you see it you may carry the News to all the *Grecians*. Now be of Courage, nor receive him as a dangerous Man, or think his Sight unfortunate; for I will turn away his Eyes from the Sight of thee. You: I call you to come out, who bind Captive-hands in Chains; I call *Ajax*, come hither from thy Tent.

Ulyf. What dost thou do, *Minerva*? By no means call him out.

Min. Wilt thou not be silent? Wilt thou not banish Fear?

Ulyf. By the Gods, let it suffice he stay within.

Min. Why must not he come? Was he not a Man before, when he designed your Death!

Ulyf. Still now he is an Enemy to me.

Min. [§] Is it not most delightful Sport to laugh at ones Enemies?

[§] *Is it not a most delightful Sport.] Minerva* here as a Goddess takes that Liberty of talking, which would have been unbecoming another, to shew the placable Temper of *Ulysses*, which was not to delight in the Misfortunes of his Enemies,

Ulyf.

Ulyf. It will fatisfy me that he should ftay within his Tent.

Min. It is plain thou feareft to fee a Mad-man.

Ulyf. I would not refuse to fee him in his Senses.

Min. But he fhall not fee thee when he is present.

Ulyf. How? If he fees with the fame Eyes.

Min. I will caft a Mift before his Eyes.

Ulyf. Let all be done by the Contrivance of the Goddefs.

Min. Stand filently as thou art.

Ulyf. Tho' I ftay, yet had I rather be abfent.

Min. Ho! you, I call thee, *Ajax*; why fo little doft thou revere thy Helper?

ACT I. SCENE II.

Minerva, Ajax, Ulyffes.

Aj. Hail, *Minerva*, hail, Daughter of *Jove*! well art thou present, and I will crown thee with golden Spoils for thy Affiftance in this Hunting.

Min. Thou haft well faid, but tell me this; haft thou well ftained thy Sword in *Grecian* Blood?

Aj. There is Reason for boasting, I do not deny it.

Min. Haft thou used thy Power againft the *Atridae*?

Aj.

Aj. Ay, so that they shall never dishonour *Ajax* more.

Min. They are dead, as I understand thy Words.

Aj. Now dead, let them take away my Armour.

Min. Be it so. What of the Son of *Laertes*, in what State is he? Hath he escaped?

Ulyf. That crafty Fox, dost thou ask me where he is?

Min. I mean *Ulysses*, thy Adversary.

Aj. Adored Goddess, he is bound within, I will not have him die yet.

Min. What more wouldest thou do? Or what more gain?

Aj. First bound to the Pillar of the Tent.

Min. What Harm wouldest thou do the miserable Man?

Ulyf. After I have made his Back bleed with a Scourge, then he shall die.

Min. Do not so afflict the Wretch.

Aj. In other Things, *Minerva*, I suffer thee to triumph; but he shall suffer this, and no other Punishment.

Min. Thou therefore, since it is thy Pleasure to do this, use thy Power, spare to do nothing of what thou conceivest.

Aj. I go to the Work, in this I obey thee. And mayest thou be ever such an Assister to me.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Minerva, Ulysses.

Min. ^h Thou seest, *Ulysses*, the Power of the Gods, how great it is: Who was more prudent than this Man? Who more equal formed to do the noblest Exploits?

Ulyf. I know none; but I lament him much, being quite wretched, tho' an Enemy, for he is intangled in an inextricable Misfortune. I look on nought that is befallen him, more

^h *Thou seest, Ulysses.*] She instructs him by the Example of *Ajax* never to oppose the Gods, which he had done in three Instances. 1, In throwing *Minerva* from her Chariot. 2, In erasing out of his Armor the Owl which was engraven on it. 3, In not obeying his Father, who advised him not to disobey the Gods, for none (he told him) that ever do, thrive, as appears by the Examples of *Thamyris* and *Niobe*.

Ulysses in his Answer to the Goddess, acknowledges the Soundness of her Doctrine, and how little Reason Mortals have to lift up themselves against the Gods, since the greatest upon Earth derive their Pedigree from no better Principle than the vilest Earth-Worms. ὅρῳ γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰδῶλα καὶ κέφην σκίας. *Euripides* hath a Sentence like it. Ἄνθρωπός ἐστι πνεῦμα, καὶ σκία μόνον. *Hor.* *Pulvis & umbra sumus.* *Anac.* Ὀλίγη κόνις. And even the Apostle *St. James Chap. iv. Ὡ 14.* Ἀλμὶς πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη, καὶ ἔπειτα ἀφανιζομένη. A Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away. By this we see, that the first Design of the Theatre was not merely to amuse Men unprofitably, but likewise to instruct them by rational and wholesome Precepts.

than

than what may befall my self: For I see that all Mortals are nought else but Images, or a vain Shadow.

Min. Therefore seeing this, speak no proud Word against the Gods, nor shew thy Haughtiness in contemptuous Speeches, if you exceed others in bodily Strength, or abound more with Wealth, since one Day is enough to ruine, and raise up all human Things; but the Gods love the Prudent, and hate the Wicked.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Chorus.

Cho. O Son of *Telamon*, who rulest the maritim Island of *Salamis*, I rejoice at thy Prosperity; but when a Blow from *Jove*, or any hostile Speech of the *Grecians* spitefully

i O Son of *Telamon*.] *Horace*, in his Art of Poëry, recites the several Offices of the *Chorus* in these Words.

*Ille bonis faveatq; & concilietur amicis,
Et regat iratos, & amet peccare timentes :
Ille dapæ laudet mensæ brevis; ille salubrem
Justitiam, &c.*

And *Sophocles* in every one of his Tragedies, strictly observes these Rules in the Songs, and other Parts of the *Chorus*, of which this is one Proof; for the *Chorus* here, which consisted of *Salaminian* Countrymen, and Subjects of *Ajax*, are unwilling to believe the foul Report, but rather impute it to the Envy of the *Grecians*; and, through the whole Piece, conceive Joy or Grief from the good or ill Fortune of their King.

uttered

uttered fullys thy Honour, I am seized with as great Concern and Fear, ^k as the timorous Dove at the Approach of Danger. So the last Night great Terror seized me, caused by an ill Report that thou, ^l raging with Madnes, entring the Pasture, didst destroy the Cattle of the *Grecians*, the Spoils taken in War, and slew them with Sword in Hand. *Ulysses* framing these backbiting Tales, conveys them to the Ears of all, and well succeeds, and speaks Things that appear credible of thee; and every one who hears him rejoyces much, insulting your Griefs. The ^m Darts of Envy soonest hit great Souls: If a-

^k *As the timorous Dove.*] The Scholiast notes here, that Doves are a very timorous Animal, and that when any Noise affrights them they shut their Eyes.

^l *Raging with Madnes.*] Gr. ἰππομανῆ, mad as a Horse. The Scholiast notes here, that the Madnes of Horses, is the most fierce of any kind of Creature.

^m *Darts of Envy soonest hit great Souls.*] As Archers with most Ease hit the greatest Mark, so the Tongue of Calumny soonest wounds the Greatest. This kind of Comparison of Fame to a Cannon, is made by our own *Shakespear* in *Hamlet*. Act IV. Scene I.

*Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest Friends,
And let them know both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: Perhaps * Fame,
Whose Whisper o'er the World's Diameter,
As level as the Cannon to his Blank,
Transports his poison'd Shot, may miss our Name,
And hit the woundless Air.*

* Which, Mr. Theobald says, hath been erroneously left printing.

ny

ny said such Things against me, he would not gain Belief; but Riches always expose Men to Envy. The Small, without the Assistance of the Great, are a weak Defence to themselves: For if the Great are supported by those of low Degree, much more are the Poor supported by the Great. But it is not possible that even the most inconsiderate Men should believe the Truth of this Report, for the babbling of such Men: We can be of no Assistance to thee in this Matter, but when they see thy Countenance, they tremble as the Flocks of Birds, who fly for Fear of the great Vulture.

STROPHE I.

ⁿ Surely *Diana*, Daughter of *Jove*, who is worshipped in *Scythia*, (O great Fame, thou Mother of our Disgrace) thrust thee on upon the publick Herds of Cattle, probably for having not received the Tribute due to her of Thanks and Praise for the Victory in which she assisted thee; or defrauded of her Part of

ⁿ Surely *Diana*, Daughter of *Jove*, who is worshipped in *Scythia*.] This may be understood of *Diana* the Goddess and Patroness of Hunters, who is worshipped in *Taurus*, a Place in *Scythia*, or the Moon, which turns People to Madness; she being, as is well known, the same with *Diana* and *Proserpine*, only differently called in Respect of her different Functions. This the *Chorus* speaks out of Benevolence to *Ajax*, that if he did this Fact, it could not be out of a well-weighed Judgment and sound Mind, but Moon-struck Phrenzy, or some extraordinary Cause.

noble Spoils taken in Hunting; or *Mars*, whose Breast is always armed with Brass, and his attending God *Enyalius*, by nightly Contrivances revenged the Affront.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For never in thy right Senses, O Son of *Telamon*, thou wouldst have done such imprudent Actions, so fallen upon Flocks. Some Distemper which the Gods inflict might cause it; but may *Jove* and *Apollo* avert the sad Report; or if the great Commanders of the Army deceived believe these Reports, or come they from the vile ° Son of *Sisyphus*, no longer, O King! hiding thy Head — in the naval Tents, endure it.

EPODE.

But rise from that Place where you are long fixed in Ease, apt to breed more Strife, while you provoke divine Vengeance; but the Inju-

° Son of Sisyphus.] The Chorus means *Ulysses*, who was Son of *Anticlea*, and *Sisyphus* King of *Corinth*. *Sisyphus* was the most subtil of Men, he engraved his Name on the Hoofs of his Cattel, so that none could discern it but himself: *Autolycus*, who lived by Theft, changed the Shape of every Thing he had stole, and stealing *Sisyphus* his Cattle, he changed them likewise: but notwithstanding this, *Sisyphus* knowing his Inscription, challenged his Cattel; whereupon *Autolycus* kindly received him, and prostituted to him his Daughter *Anticlea*, of whom he begat *Ulysses*, but he being brought up with *Laertes*, was called his Son.

C


ries

ries of thy Enemies succeed against thee ^P without Opposition, while with their Tongues they utter heavy Reproaches; but Grief oppresseth me.



ACT II. SCENE I.

Tecmessa, Chorus.

Tec. [¶]  Ship-Companions of *Ajax*,
[¶] *Athenians* by Descent, we
 mourn, being careful for the
 Welfare of *Telamon's* Son, far

[¶] *Without Opposition.*] *Gr.* ἐν ἰσχυρίσιν βῆσσαι. In Valleys exposed to the Wind; *i. e.* it runs like Wild-fire.

[¶] *O Ship-Companions.*] Here the Poet introduces *Tecmessa*, giving an Account of what *Ajax* had done; and likewise the *Chorus* informs her, that the Cattle which he had slain, belonged to the *Grecians*: So by informing each other of what they were ignorant of before, are confirmed in the Belief of the Report which *Ulysses* spread, which he received from *Minerva*. *Tecmessa* was the Captive Bride of *Ajax*, and therefore may well be supposed to shew the same Concern for him, as *Briseis* did for *Achilles*.

[¶] *Athenians by Descent, we mourn, being*] This the Poet says, only to attract the Benevolence of the Audience, who consisted of *Athenians* when this Piece was first acted. For tho' *Salamis* was near *Athens*, yet they were different Countries; nor can I see why they have a Title to be called *Athenians*, because *Telamon* was of *Ægina*, near that Country, as the
 from

from his Country; for now the terrible, the great, and brave *Ajax*, lies overwhelmed in a Storm of Woe.

Cho. What Grief hath the Night produced to damp his former Joy? Thou Daughter of *Phrygian Teleutas*, since valiant *Ajax* preserving thee, keeps thee as his captive Bride, so that from thy Knowledge thou mayest speak.

Tec. How should I speak what is not to be uttered? For you would hear of Sorrow equal to Death; for the noble *Ajax*, seized with Madness, in the Night hath offended: This you may know; behind the Tent Cattle slain with Hands, all stained with Blood, the Ruins wrought by this Man, witness his Crime.

STROPHE.

Cho. What Report dost thou bring of this furious Man, intolerable and yet undeniable, before spread by the great Army of the *Grecians*, which much Discourse spreads farther? Wo is me! I fear the approaching Ill; for this illustrious Man will die with his self-smitting Hand, after he hath slain the Cattle with his bloody Sword; and the Keepers of the Flocks.

Tec. Wo is me! He is come hither bringing captive Beasts, whereof he hath slain one within upon the Ground; others striking, he

Scholiast would fain persuade us. If by the Words $\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha$, $\tau\epsilon\lambda\alpha\mu\omega\varsigma$, he means *Ægina*, *Telamon's* Grandmother, she was Daughter of *Æsopus*, King of *Bæotia*, which was divided from *Attica* by the Hill *Cytheron*.

hath divided in two, taking two white Rams, of one he hath, as a Mower, cut off the Head and Tongue, and hath flung it away; tying another to a Pillar, and taking a great Horfewhip, he whips him dismally with a double Cord, reproaching with vile Words, which some evil Dæmon, and no Man, hath taught him.

ANTISTROPHE.

Cho. Now is it Time that every one of us should veil his Head, and privately take Flight, or else speedily embark, and launching out our Ships, sail with a full Career. The two *Atridæ* thunder such Threats against us, * I fear being stoned to Death, lest we should suffer Punishment with him whom inevitable Madness hath seized.

Tec. He rageth no more, but ceaseth as the fierce South Wind, if the Lightnings cease to flash: And now grown wise, new Grief possesseth him. For the Consideration of Evils, caused by our selves when we have none else on whom we can charge them, is most afflicting.

Cho. But if he hath ceased from his Madness, then I think we are happy. For since

* *I fear being stoned to Death.*] Gr. *τιφόνειμας λιθά-
λυσαν ἄρειν*, I fear *Mars* the Stoner. The Word *ἄρειν*,
both here and in many other Places in *Sophocles*, signi-
fies Death.

the Evil is vanished, we have the less Reason to be concerned.

Tec. Whether if any should grant the Choice, wouldest thou chuse to afflict thy Friends, while thou thy self art in Pleasure, or to be in the same common Calamity with them?

Cho. The two-fold Evil is the greatest.

Tec. Therefore *Ajax*, tho' in his Senses, is miserable.

Cho. What is that thou hast said? I know not what thou sayest.

Tec. When this Man was afflicted with his Disease, he was pleased with those Evils in which he was plunged; but afflicted us who were sensible, with Sorrow: But now that he hath ceased, and breathed from his Disease, he is quite changed with sudden Grief, but we are no otherwise than before: These are therefore two Evils instead of one.

Cho. I agree with thee, and fear, least a Blow should come from some God, and strike us. But how, if he is free from his Disease, is he no more satisfied than when he was diseased?

Tec. You must be informed how the Case was.

Cho. How did the Mischief begin; declare it to us, since we are Partakers in the Grief.

Tec. You shall know the whole Matter, as being Partaker in the Sorrow. Towards the End of the Night, when the Evening

[Lamps no longer shined.] i. e. when the Evening Stars shone no longer, or rather, when the Lamps

Lamps no longer shined, taking his two edged Sword, he sought vain Pretences to go out. I blame him, and say, what dost thou, *Ajax*? Why unbidden, nor called by any of the Messengers, dost thou attempt thus to go out, nor alarmed by the Trumpet's Voice, but now when the whole Army sleeps. He spoke to me what was short, but usually said, Silence is an Ornament to Women. Then hearing this I ceased, but he rushed out alone, nor can I say what he did there; but he came in leading Bulls tied together, Dogs which guarded the Flocks, and a Prey of horned Cattle: Some he decollated, turning others upside down, he slew and dissected, others he beat as Captives, thus raging against the Herd; then rushing forth to the Door, he held Discourse^u with some Shadow; now against the *Atridæ*, now speaking of *Ulysses*, uttering many ridiculous Speeches, mentioning how great an Injury he repaid them: Then rushing in again to the Tent, in a while he returned to himself, and when he saw the Tent full of Ruines he had made, striking is Breast, he roared out, and fate down among

that were set up in the Evening to give Light in the Camp, went out.

^u *With some Shadow.*] Here *Tecmessa* not knowing, that the Goddess *Minerva* talked with *Ajax*, imputes his hastening out of his Tent when he was called by her, and his discoursing with her, to his Madness: For mad Folks usually either talk to themselves, or with their own Shadow.

the

the slaughtered Sheep, and holding his Hair fast in his Finger Nails, he sate a great while speechless; at last he uttered dismal Threats against me, unless I shewed how every Misfortune happened, and enquired in what he had been employed; and I, Friends, out of Fear, gave him a perfect Relation of all that had passed, as far as I knew. He presently made the whole Tent resound with dismal Cries, such as I never heard before from him, for he always reckoned such Lamentations proper only to weak and faint Spirits: Disdaining therefore such shrill Cries, he used to roar out like a bellowing Bull. But now afflicted with such a sad Misfortune, without eating or drinking, among the Cattle slain with the Sword he sits down, and he is certainly prepared to do some desperate Deed, he speaks such Things, and utters such Complaints.
 * But, O Friends, I beseech you, (for, for this Cause I came out) go in and help him, if you can in ought, for such Men are prevailed upon by their Friends.

Cho. O *Tecmessa*, Daughter of *Teleutas*,

* *But, O Friends, I beseech you go in and help him.*] The Contrivance of the Poet is admirable here, who, in order to bring *Ajax* to shew his Grief upon the Stage, introduceth first *Tecmessa*, begging the Assistance of the *Chorus* to comfort *Ajax*, as being abler to do it than she, who was but a weak Woman, and a Captive; then, lest the *Chorus* should go out for that Purpose, supposeth *Ajax* to bawl out from within.

thou tellest us terrible News, that *Ajax* is mad in his Misfortunes.

Aj. Wo is me!

Tec. Presently he will cry louder, have you not heard?

Aj. Wo is me!

Cho. The Man seems to be still afflicted with his Disease, or grieved with the Remembrance of his former Madness.

Aj. O Son, Son!

Tec. Wo is me a Wretch! *Euryfaces*, he bawls out for thee. What doth he desire with all this Earnestness?

Aj. ^y I call *Teucus*, where is *Teucus*? Will he ever be chasing his Prey, while I perish?

Cho. The Man seems to be sensible, open the Door, perhaps he will have some Discretion, when he sees me.

Tec. ^z Behold, I open, you may see his Actions, and in what Case he is.

^y *call Teucus.*] *Ajax* having determined with himself not to survive the Disgrace of killing the Cattle, calls for *Teucus* to commit to him the Care of his Child after his Decease. This supposing the Absence of *Teucus* was very suitable to the Purpose of the Poet; for had he been at home, he would have been a Curb to *Ajax* his Rage of Grief. There is much the same Conduct observed in the *Electra*, where *Ægisthus* is supposed to be in the Fields, which gives a better Opportunity to *Electra* to utter her Complaints before the Spectators, and so to move their Compassion, which is one great End of Tragedy.

^z *Behold, I open, you may see.*] Here is represented to the View of the Spectators, *Ajax* all bloody, lying with his bloody Sword among the slaughtered Cattle; a Circumstance very moving.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE II.

Ajax, Tecmessa, Chorus.

Ajax. Wo is me, Friends and Ship-Companions, and only of all my Friends who persevere in the strict Law of Friendship. ^a You see how Waves, as a Ship beaten by a terrible Storm, exercise all their Fury against me.

Cho. Wo is me! How true what thou hast attested now appears, the Thing is plain, that he is beside himself.

Aj. Wo is me. Ye Race of Men, Assistants in the naval Art, who sail'd hither rowling the Oars in the Sea, you alone I have found of all the Chiefs, regarding me; now all of you together rid me of my wretched Life.

Cho. Speak good Words I pray, ^b lest applying a bad Remedy to a bad Disease, you bring upon your self a worse Evil than the former.

Aj. Thou seest me a brave stout hearted

^a *You see how Waves.] Ajax* here, in order to shew the Greatness of his Calamity, makes use of a figurative Representation of it, drawn from Things most familiar to Sailors, viz. the violent Agitation of the Waves after a Storm.

^b *Lest applying.] i. e.* Strive not to hasten on your Death, which will be an Evil worse than your Disease of Madness.

Man

Man, and undaunted in Battles of War, now dreadful with my Hands among innocent Cattle; wo is me, what Slaughter have I made? How have I made myself a Reproach?

Tec. O my Lord *Ajax*, I beseech you say not so,

Aj. ^c Wilt thou not go hence? Alas! Alas!

Cho. By the Gods submit and be wise.

Aj. O! unfortunate Wretch that I am, who let go from my Hand those Villains, and falling upon innocent Oxen and Goats, spilt their black Blood.

Cho. Why shouldest thou grieve for what is done, for it cannot be undone?

Aj. O! thou who seest all Things, and art the Instrument of all Mischief, the most filthy Varlet of the Army, now how dost thou laugh at me, what Pleasure dost thou take?

Cho. ^d Every one laughs or mourns by God's Permission.

Aj. O that I might see him tho' thus afflicted; wo is me!

^c *Wilt thou not go hence.*] *Tecmessa* continuing to break in upon the Discourse which *Ajax* holds with the *Chorus*, he desires her to retire into the Tent, not out of Contempt as being his Captive, but Familiarity, as his Wife.

^d *Every one laughs.*] As all Things are by the Permission of the Gods, who often turn bad Actions to good Ends, so likewise that *Ulysses* should sport himself with your Misfortunes is by their Permission.

Cho.

Cho. Speak nothing great ; seest thou not to what Evil thou art come ?

Aj. O *Jupiter*, the Father of my Ancestors, that I could first destroy that flattering Enemy, that Vagabond, and the other two Princes, and at last die my self.

Tec. Since you pray for such Things, pray likewise that I may die, why should I live when thou art dead ?

Aj. O my Light, now Darknes, that shone on me, now dark as Hell, take, O take me an Inhabitant to your gloomy Regions, for I cannot look to the Race of Gods or meek Men for Assistance, but the powerful Daughter of *Jove* persecutes me to Death. Whither can I flee ? Where shall I rather remain ? For my Misfortunes destroy me, and we are undone with that foolish Prey ; and the whole Army on every Side with all their Power will destroy me.

Tec. Wo is me : So great a Man to say such Things now, as before he would have disdain'd to say !

Aj. O Brooks that flow into the Sea, and Caves and Forests near the Shore, long Time you have kept me at *Troy*, but no longer with Breath you shall. O neighbouring Streams of *Scamander* favouring the *Argives*, you shall no more see me. * I speak a bold

* *I speak a bold Word.*] In the Condition *Ajax* was, it was not unseemly for him to boast of his Greatness,

Word,

Word, such a one as *Troy* never saw in the Army which came from the *Grecian* Land, and now dishonoured I lye here.

Cho. I know not how to hinder thee, or suffer thee to speak, being plunged in so much Evil.

Aj. † Ah! Who could think my Name should thus agree with my Evils? Now is it Time for me thrice to lament, being plunged into so many Miseries: § Whose Father from the Land of *Idæa* having done

but it rather increaseth the Passion of the Tragedy. Thus in the *Trachiniae*, *Hercules* near his Death boasted in these Words.

ὦ χεῖρες, χεῖρες,
ὦ ἴωτα, καὶ τέτι, ὦ φίλοι βραχίονες,
ὕμεις οὐκ οἶνοι δὴ καθέσταθ', οἵ ποτε
νιμίας ἵνοιχον βυκόλων ἀλάστορα
λέοντ', ἅπλαστοι θρέμμα καὶ προσήτορον, &c.

The Apostle *St. Paul* himself did the same, when he said 2 *Tim.* iv. 6. *I am now ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at hand, I have fought a good Fight, &c.*

† *Ah who could think my Name.*] Here is what we call a Pun, which *Ajax* makes upon his own Name, whose two first Letters are the same with *ai*, a Word of Sorrow. This I fear is scarce becoming the Gravity of this kind of Poem.

§ *Whose Father from the Land.*] His Father *Telamon* assisting *Hercules* in his Wars against *Troy*, was the first who mounted the Wall: Wherefore *Hercules* gave him τὰ πρῶτα καλλίστηα, the chief Reward, which was *Hesione* Daughter of *Laomedon*. The Occasion of this War was, because *Laomedon* denied to give *Hercules* the two white Horses he was to have had as a Re-

the

the noblest Deeds in War, came home loaded with Honours; but I his Son came to this Place, not with less Strength endowed, nor famed for less Atchievements; now dishonoured of the *Grecians*, here I perish: ^h And so much I think I know, if living *Achilles* were to decide the Controversy of the Armour, and to adjudge to either the Precedence in Valour, none else should have them but me. But now the *Atridæ* allowed Wisdom as proper only to that crafty *Ulysses*, ⁱ slighting my Virtues: Unless my Eyes and Mind had diverted me from my Resolution, they had never passed a Judgment against any other Man: But now the terrible, the invincible Goddess, Daughter of *Jove*, hath deceived me, when I stretched out my Hand against them, inflicting on me a violent Disease, so that in the Blood of those Oxen I stained my Hand, but the *Atridæ* having escaped against my Will, deride me. But when God opposeth, the Weak may escape the Stronger: And now what must I do, who apparently am ha-

ward of his Valour in slaying the Sea-Monster, and delivering *Hesione*, who was to have been devoured by him.

^h *And so much I think I know.*] Observe all along, how *Ajax* his Discourse favours of the Pride and Haughtiness of his Spirit.

ⁱ *Slighting my Virtues.*] The Greek is *αιδεσθαι τῶν ἀρετῶν*, of this Man, meaning himself, a Way of speaking very familiar with *Sophocles*.

ted of the Gods? The *Grecian* Army hates me, all *Troy* hates me, and the neighbouring Countrey. Shall I go home and leave the Ports wherein my Ships are harbour'd, and the *Atridae* to themselves, and sail home over the *Ægean* Sea? What Fame can I shew my Father *Telamon*? How will he endure to see me return'd empty and without noble Spoils, with which he once went laden home? That is not to be born. But what if I go to the *Trojan* Guards and attacking them by my self fall in some brave Action? But there I should gratify the *Atridae*, it ne'er shall be; but some Action must be attempted, and such whereby I may shew my old Father that I am no degenerate Coward. It is the certain Sign of a base Spirit, to covet a long Life which is attended with many Troubles. What Comfort can there be in a Multitude of Days which only serve to defer desired Death? And I look upon him as the vilest of Wretches who encourageth himself with fruitless Hopes; but it becomes a generous Man bravely to live, or as bravely to die in the Pursuit of Glory; thou hast heard the Sum of what I had to say.

Cbo. No Body can say, my Lord, that thou hast spoke unlike thyself: ^k Yet cease

^k *Yet cease from this, &c.]* The *Chorus* here endeavouring to comfort *Ajax*, takes the Liberty of a Friend, and talks more boldly than *Tecmessa*; for she artfully shewing her Condition, endeavours to mollify him, by moving him to Pity.

from this Fury of thy Mind, and let the Judgment of thy Friends prevail, and lay aside those Cares.

Tec. O my Lord *Ajax*, no greater Evils can afflict Mankind than Fortune's Malice often lays upon us. I am descended of a free Father, and the most wealthy of the *Phrygians*, but now I am a Servant, for so the Gods and your victorious Hand would have it; but since I was rais'd to your Bed, you are the only Object of my Love. Therefore I beseech you by^l Domestick *Jove*, and by^m our Marriage Bed, which makes us one, suffer me not to endure a Reproach among thy Enemies; for if thou wilt die and leave me, be assured that I in that Day shall be drag'd away with Indignity by the *Grecians* to

^l By domestick *Jove*.] Those who cohabited together, saith the Scholiast, invoked Domestick *Jove*, those who were Friends Friendly *Jove*, those in the same Fortune Social *Jove*, Strangers Hospitable *Jove*, those who swore to each other *Horkius*, those who prayed *Hikesius*, and Brothers *Homognius Jove*; but doubtless it was the same *Jove* who was always meant, but differently styled, in respect of his different Offices.

^m By our Marriage Bed.] Here *Tecmessa* modestly puts *Ajax* in Mind of their conjugal Loves: Whereas *Euripides* hath been guilty of a Fault in his *Hecuba*, in introducing that Queen speaking very immodestly:

πῦ τὰς φίλας δὲ τ' Ὀφρῆνας δείξεις, ἀναξ, &c.

But *Sophocles* here imitates *Homer*, who introduceth *Andromache* endeavouring to move *Hector* to Compassion, and divert him from his Purpose of going to the Battle.

live

live a servile Life, together with thy Child. And some harsh Master will bitterly reproach me, whose Spleen shall dictate Words like these. " Behold the Concubine of *Ajax*,
" who was the most powerful Prince in all
" the Army, what Servitude doth she now
" endure instead of how much Honour ? "
Thus will my Fate undo me: Such foul Reproaches are unbecoming thee or thy Race. Therefore respect thy aged Father whom thou hast left at home; respect thy Mother who with many Prayers solicits the Gods for your safe Return home; pity, my Lord, thy Child, who if depriv'd of you will be brought up under unfriendly Tutors. This will be our sad Portion of Evils when you die. For me I have nothing to which I can look with Hopes of Succour besides thee; thou hast destroy'd my Countrey by the Sword, my Mother likewise, and Death hath taken my Father to the Inhabitants below. What Countrey therefore will supply the Want of thee? What Riches? In thee I am only safe: But remember me, a Man ought to remember the Benefits he hath receiv'd, for Kindness always begets Kindness: But from whom the Memory of good Treatment slips, he cannot be esteem'd a generous Man.

Cbo. I would thy stubborn Heart were mollified like mine with Pity, thou would'st applaud her Speeches.

Aj. And

Aj. And much Applause shall she have of me, if she will only do what I command her.

Tec. My Lord, thou shalt ever find me obedient to thy Will.

Aj. Bring to me then my Child, that I may see him.

Tec. But I sent him away for Fear.

Aj. Of me, when my Distemper seiz'd me; was't not so?

Tec. Ay, lest you should happen to meet the poor Infant and slay him.

Aj. That Act indeed would not have been unlike me.

Tec. Therefore his Safety was my Care.

Aj. I commend the Deed, and the Diligence you used.

Tec. Wherein therefore can I serve thee?

Aj. Permit me to see and speak to him.

Tec. He is attended by the Servants hard by.

Aj. What therefore hinders that I may not enjoy his Presence?

Tec. My Child, thy Father calls thee. Bring him hither whosoever of the Servants bears him in his Arms.

Aj. Doth he answer to thy Call, or did he not hear thee?

Tec. One of the Servants brings him hither. [*Euryfaces is brought in by a Servant.*]

Aj. Bear him hither, he will not fear when he looks on this fresh Slaughter, if he

D

be

be truly my Son. He must be instructed in his Youth in the fierce Manners of his Father, and be made like him in his Nature. Nay, Child, mayst thou be more happy than thy Father, in other Things like him, and thou wilt be no ill Man. And herein I reckon thee happy that thou art sensible of none of these Evils; in knowing nothing is the happiest Life, for not to know is an Ill that never causeth Grief. For when thou art arriv'd to that Perfection of Understanding, that thou canst tell what it is to rejoice and grieve, thou mayst shew among my Enemies of what Father thou art descended. In the mean while let thy tender Spirits so support thee, that as the Vigour of thy Mind encreases thou mayst encrease thy Mother's Joy. I know none of the *Grecians* will injure thee with vile Reproaches, tho' absent from me: I will leave thee *Teucus* for thy Guardian who will carefully instruct thy Youth, though he is now far off, ⁿ keeping Guard against the

ⁿ *Keeping Guard against the Enemies.*] i. e. the *Thracians*: For toward the End of the *Trojan* Wars, they assisted the *Trojans*, wherefore the *Grecians* set Ambuscades at all the Avenues and Passages out of that Countrey, that they might fall upon them in their Way, and cut them off before they joined the *Trojans*. The Poet therefore supposed *Teucus* to have been one of those whose Post was to watch them; and him, being his Brother, *Ajax* promiseth to leave *Telemessa* and *Euryaces*, as their Defender against those Dangers which she was apprehensive they would be in after his Death.

Enemies.

Enemies. But, O Soldiers, Sea-faring People, I intreat this Favour of you all, to declare this my Command to him, that taking my Child to my Palace in *Salamis*, he may shew him to *Telamon* and to my Mother *Eriboea*, that he may be their continual Comfort in old Age, until they arrive at the Chambers of the infernal Gods. Nor shall any expose my Armour to the *Grecians* as the Subject of another Contest, nor to my Plague *Ulysses*; but thou Child take that which hath thy ° Name, *Eurysaces*, and hold it, turning by the folded Rein, the sevenfold impenetrable Shield: P My other Armour shall be buried with me. But speedily receive this Child, take him hence, nor fill the Tent with thy Cries. The Woman much laments, shut quick the Doors, q it is not the Part of a wise Physician, to repeat Enchantments to a Wound that requires cutting.

Cho. I feared thy Resolution, for thy Tongue so sharpened pierceth me.

° *Which hath thy Name.*] His Name was composed of the two Words, *εὐρύς* and *σάκος*, a broad Shield.

P *My other Armour shall be buried with me.*] Thus *Homer* mentions one who after his Death was burnt with his Armour:

Ἄλ' ἄρα μιν καί κεν σὺν ἑλισσι δαδ' αἰετοῖσι.

q *It is not the Part, &c.*] This is spoke in Allusion to an ancient Custom of curing by Enchantments, or Musick; so the Sting of the *Tarantula* is said only to be cured by Musick.

Tec. O my Lord *Ajax*, what hast thou resolved to do?

Aj. Judge not nor enquire, it is a good Thing to be prudent.

Tec. Wo is me, how I despond, and I beseech thee by thy Infant and the Gods betray us not.

Aj. Thou grievest much, knowest thou not that I am no more a Debtor to the Gods?

Tec. Good Words, I beseech thee.

Aj. Speak to those who will hear thee.

Tec. And wilt thou not yield to me?

Aj. Thou talkest very much.

Tec. I fear, O King.

Aj. Wilt thou not shut her up?

[*To the Chorus.*

Tec. Now by the Gods be mild.

Aj. Thou thinkest foolishly, if thou thinkest to instruct my Manners.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

Cho. O *Salamis*, who art encompass'd by the raging Sea, thou happy Isle, how dost thou enjoy the Praise of every Tongue? But I unhappy Wretch, it is a long Time since I have here remained in Mount *Ida*'s verdant Pastures, of no Account, harass'd with the tedious

dious Toils of War, having the sad Hope that I should at last arrive at the dark abominable Grave.

ANTISTROPHE I.

And to me incurable *Ajax* is ^r second in Misfortunes; still alas! continuing in that Madness sent by divine Appointment, whom thou, O *Salamis*, didst send out before a Victor in many Battles; but now besides himself he plungeth his Friends into sad Grievs; and all his other Acts performed with his valiant Hand are flighted by the unkind *Atridæ*.

STROPHE II.

How his miserable Mother worn out with many Days, and full of grey Hairs, when she hears that he is afflicted with Madness, unhappy will lament, not with the Lamentations of the sorrowful Nightingale, but will bewail with piercing Cries, with clapping of

^r *Is second in Misfortunes.*] The Greek Word is *ἰσίδης*; which is deriv'd from *ἰσι* and *ἰδης*, and primarily signifies no more than one who sits by, or a looker on; but among the *Greeks* it was us'd to signify him, who, wher two had wrestled before, wrestled with him who had the Mastery. So here the Chorus uses it in a metaphorical Sense, to signify that *Ajax* is their Second, or is plung'd in the same Calamities with them,

her Hands striking her aged Breast, and tearing her grey Hairs.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Better is he who lies hid in the dark Grave, than he who is diseased without Relief. For *Ajax*, when he left his Father's Family, was the greatest of all the *Grecians*, but now no longer continueth in his accustomed Manners, but is besides himself. O miserable Father! what a sad Calamity which is befallen your Son will shortly wound your Ears, a Calamity which no Age ever saw befall the Descendants of *Æacus* except this.



ACT III. SCENE I.

Ajax, Chorus.

Aj.



ONG^s and infinite Duration of Time brings all hidden Things from their gloomy Coverts, and conceals Things which now ap-

* *Long and infinite Duration of Time.*] Here *Ajax* comes in and talks as if by the Persuasion of *Tecmessa* he were reconciled to Life, but this must be understood as the Effect of a sudden Passion, or a Pretence the better to carry on his Purpose: For soon after he went out and fell upon his Sword,

pear: There is nothing that is not to be hoped for; even the most sacred Oaths and stubborn Minds are broken. I who continued long stubborn, * as slack'd Iron, am grown mild by this Woman's Discourses: For I am touch'd with Pity on her behalf, lest I should leave her a Widow among my Enemies, and my Child an Orphan; ^u but I will go to the Streams and Pasture near the Shores, that I may purify myself from my Filthiness, and so escape the grievous Anger of the Goddess; and going until I find some unfrequented Place, I will hide this thy Sword, the most hated of all thy Armour, in a Hole dug in the Earth, where none shall see it, but Night and the Grave will keep it below. But I, since I received in my Hands this Gift of *Hector*, the worst of all my Enemies, received nothing acceptable from the *Grecians*; but it is a true Proverb among Men, * the Gifts of Enemies are not

* *As slack'd Iron am grown mild.*] As Iron which being dipped in Oyl grows softer, so am I mollified by the Speech of this Woman. Or thus, as Iron when it is dipped red hot in Water hisses and roars, and after grows still, when cold: So am I? Thus in *Homer*

ἐν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ

βάπτῃται μεγάλην ἄχοντι,

Dipped in cold Water which roars aloud.

* *But I will go to the Streams.*] See our Notes on *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Act V. Scene I.

* *The Gifts of Enemies are not Gifts.*] An *Oxymoron*, or an Expression spoke with such an Affectation of

Gifts nor profitable. Wherefore for the future we shall learn to honour the *Atridæ*: They are our Governors, so that we must submit; why not? Things most potent and divine submit to Honours: y The snowy Winter submits to the fruitful Harvest: The Circle of the sad Night to the Day, to shew its Light born on white z Coursers: A gentle Blast lays to sleep the roaring Sea: And pow-

Wit, that it seems rather to favour of Folly, yet it is very elegant. We have many such Expressions in sacred as well as prophane Writings: As 1 Tim. v. 6. *but she that liveth in Pleasure, is dead while she liveth.*

y *The snowy Winters.*] As all Things on Earth have their Vicissitudes and Changes, so, (saith *Ajax*) is it fit that I who a while ago raged with Madness, should return to my right Senses? By the same Argument *Horace* consoles his Friend *Valgius*, *Lib. 2. Ode 9.*

*Non semper imbres Nubibus hispidos
Manant in Agros; aut Mare Caspium
Vexant inæquales procellæ
Usque, &c.*

z *Born on white Coursers.*] Gr. τῇ λευκοπόδω ἡμῖνα this Epithet is given to the Day, because, saith the Scholiast on this Place, the Sun which ushereth in the Day is said to ride in a Chariot drawn by two Horses, whereof one is called *Lampon*, and the other *Phaëthon*. But he tells us in another Place that *Phaëthon* is the Sun himself, or the Son of the Sun: Which is confirm'd by the Testimonies of *Ovid*, *Met. 2.* and *Homer*, *Odyss. 11. 320.* the latter of which hath the Words, ἥλιος φαίθων. The Poets generally assign him four Horses. Namely, *Pyrois* from πῦρ, ignis, Fire; *Eous* from ἠώς, Aurora, the Morning; *Aëthon* from αἴθερ, uro; *Phlegon*, from φαῖς, inflammo.

erful

erful Sleep that binds us as with Fetters,
 sets us free again; nor always holds us. Why
 therefore should we not know how to be
 Wise? For me I know, that when I was an
 Enemy, I was so far an Enemy as to become
 a Friend again; and so far I would help my
 Friend, as one who will not be so always:
 For the Port of Friendship is with many Men
 unfaithful; but herein it will be well. Do thou
 go in, *Tecmessa*, and pray to the Gods happily
 to accomplish what my Heart desires, and you
 O Companions, herein honour me, and sig-
 nify to *Teucrus* when he comes, to take care
 of us, and be kind to you likewise: But I go
 where it is fit I go, and, you, do what I say,
 and soon you shall know that tho' now I am
 unhappy, yet am I secure from all Evils.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Chorus.

STROPHE.

Cho. * He is o'ercome with Love: I am

* *He is overcome with Love.*] It was necessary here
 that *Ajax* should have some Time to retire to a conve-
 nient Place to effect his Purpose, before the Messenger
 came with Orders from *Teucrus*, that he should be kept
 in; otherwise *Ajax* might have been met by the Mes-
 senger. And that Time the Poet supposes to be spent
 in the Song of the *Chorus* for his happy Change.

overjoyed

overjoyed. ^b O *Pan*, conversant near the Seas, come from the Precipices of the snowy *Cyllenian* Rocks, Leader of Dances, as thy Divinity hath taught us Dances in *Nyssa* and in *Cnossus*, now is it Time for me to lead up such Dances. O *Delian* King *Apollo*, who passest over the *Icarian* Sea, mayest thou ever shew such Favour and Benevolence to me.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For warlike *Ajax* hath banished cruel Sadness from our Eyes. O *Jove*, now the clear and bright Day is at Hand wherein we may go to the *Grecian* Ships. For *Ajax* forgetting his Grievs, hath perform'd lawful Sacrifices to the Gods, worshipping them with the greatest Submission. Great Time destroys and consumes all Things. There is nothing that can be mention'd which we may not hope

^b O *Pan* conversant near the Seas.] They invoke *Pan* here as being the President of Chorus's, and the Reasons given by the Scholiast why he is called *ἐρίπλανκτι*, or Sea-Wanderer, are, because he assisted the *Athenians* in a Sea Fight; or because he took *Typhon* in a Net; or, because he is worshipped on the Tops of Mountains near the Sea; or, because Fishermen worship him as their God; or, because he loves Noise in Chorus's; hence *ἐρίπλανκτι*, as *ἐρίεργος*, because the Sea makes a Noise: Or lastly, because he is the Overseer of Flocks near the Sea. But whether any of these Reasons, or which of them resolves the Question, I will leave it to the Judgment of the Learned,


for:

for: For beyond all hope *Ajax* is no more malicious against the *Atridae*; but all Strife is vanish'd and gives Place to Love.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

Messenger, Chorus.

Mef.  Y Friends, this first I will declare to you, *Teucus* is just arrived from the *Myfian* Hills; and as he comes through the Middle of the Camp, all the *Argives*, with one Voice, reproach him. For knowing him as he pass'd along, they surrounded him, and then from every Side reviled him; and there was none who called him not the Brother of the Madman, and Conspirator against the Army, so that he scarce avoided being stoned to Death; it came even to this, that with their Hands their Swords were drawn from their Sheaths. At last Contention ceased by the Intercession of the Seniors, when it was at its greatest Height. But where is *Ajax*, that I may tell him what I have to say? For it is but just that we discover all the Matter to our Superiors.

Cho.

Cho. He is not within, but is just now gone out, having undertaken a new Enterprize; his Manners too are changed.

Mef. Alas! alas! Either he was too slow in sending me on this Journey, or I too slowly came.

Cho. What Advantage hath been intercepted?

Mef. *Teucrus* said, that this Man should be kept within the Tent, nor suffered to go out until he came.

Cho. But he is gone out, and returned to a better Mind, to reconcile himself to the angry Gods.

Mef. These Words are full of Folly, if *Calchas* wisely prophesied.

Cho. What hath he prophesied concerning this Affair?

Mef. So much I know, as now I shall speak, for I was witness to it. From the Council and the royal Circle, where the *Atreides* sat, *Calchas* rose up alone, and kindly putting his Hand into *Teucrus's*, spoke to this Purpose. "See that with all your Art, you endeavour to shut up *Ajax* for this present Day in his Tent, if ever hereafter you would see him alive; for this Day alone the Anger of the Goddess *Minerva* pursues him. And farther added, proud Men and mighty Bodies fall by the grievous Punishment of the Gods, when being born like other Men, they think not like them". But he, when he

3

came

came from home, shewed himself foolish, when his Father spoke well, and said; Son, overcome in War, but always with God. But he haughtily and foolishly answered, Father, even the worthless Person may obtain the Victory with the Assistance of the Gods, but I without them hope to attract to my self that Glory; such a proud Speech he uttered. Then a second Time, when divine *Minerva* exhorting him, said, that he should turn his bloody Hand against the Enemies: Then he replied a terrible and unutterable Speech, Queen, stand by other *Grecians*, the Fight will never break out near my Post. By such Speech he gained the implacable Anger of the Goddess, not thinking as a Man; but if this Day he is in Being, soon, through God, we may be his Preservers. Such Things the Prophet said. But *Teucrus* immediately sent me to you from the Palace, to bear to you this Command, to guard him; but if we are deprived of him, he is no more, if *Calchas* be wise.

Cho. O wretched *Tecmessa*, unfortunate Lady! Come out and behold this Man, and hear what Words he speaks. Alas! It is to be feared that all our Joys are fled.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Messenger, Chorus, Tecmeffa with her Child.

Tec. Why do you again raise me a Wretch, who but now rested from mighty Woes?

Cho. Behold this Man, who comes bringing to us an Account of the Action of *Ajax*, which I lament.

Tec. Alas me! What sayest thou Man?

Mes. As to you I know not; but as to *Ajax*, if he be gone out, I distrust.

Tec. He is indeed gone out, which makes me grieve. What sayest thou?

Mes. *Teucrus* sent Word to shut him up in the Tent, nor suffer him to go out alone.

Tec. Where is *Teucrus*, and why doth he say so?

Mes. He is hard by, and thinks the *Exit* of *Ajax* fatal.

Tec. Wo is me a Wretch, from whom learnt he that?

Mes. From a Prophet taught of God, that this Day brings him Life or Death.

Tec. O me! my Friends, assist in this my Necessity. Let some hasten for *Teucrus* to come with Speed; let some go to the western, others to the eastern Tops of the Hills, and search the sad *Exit* of *Ajax*; for by him I find I am deceived, and cast out of his former Grace. O me, my Child! What shall I do?

It

It is no Time to sit, but I will go wheresoever I can: We will go, we will hasten; this Juncture is not for sitting, while we would save a Man who hastens to die.

Cho. ^c I am prepared to go, and I will shew it not in Word alone, but Swiftneſs ſhall follow both of Feet and Action.

[*Scene Changes to a Forest, where Ajax is alone, his Sword fixed in the Earth, with the Point upwards.*]

Aj. The murdering Sword ſtands ^d moſt ſharp for Slaughter, if I have Time to reaſon thus, the Gift of *Heſtor*, the moſt hated to me of all the *Pbrygians*, and moſt odious to behold. It is fixed in that hoſtile Land of *Troy*, newly ſharpened with an Iron-eating Whetſtone; preparing well I have fixed it, the moſt acceptable to me, by which with Speed I die. And thus we are prepared. Firſt of all then, O *Jupiter*, aſſiſt me; I ſhall not de-

^e *I am prepared to go*] While the *Chorus*, and others, are gone in Queſt of *Ajax*, the Scene changes to an open Place, where the Poet introduces *Ajax* making a very moving Speech before his Death, and then falling upon his Sword, in the Preſence of the Spectators: This is contrary to what *Æſchylus* before had done in treating upon this Subject, and to *Horace's* Rule.

----- *Non tamen intus*

Digna geri promes in Scenam, &c.

Yet *Hedeline* in his *Praxi Theatrica*, ſtrenuouſly defends him for this Conduct.

^d *Moſt ſharp for Slaughter.*] *Gr.* τομῆτατο.

fire

fire to receive a great Gift; send to me some Messenger, to bear the sad Report to *Teucus*, that he may take me first away, fallen on my bloody Sword; lest, first seen by the Enemies, I be cast forth to the Dogs, and to the Birds a Prey. This, O *Jupiter*! I commit to thy Care; and I call likewise *Mercury*, the conductor of infernal Spirits, with a gentle and swift Course to bear me to the Shades below, * when I have slain my self with this Sword. And I call as my Assistants those eternal Virgins, ever seeing all the Afflictions incident to Men, the venerable Furies, quick-footed, to come and revenge the Sufferings of the Dead; them I call to know how miserably I perish by the *Atreidæ*, and may they destroy likewise those vile pernicious Wretches; as they see me fall self-murdered, so may they fall murdered by their most beloved Children. Go, swift revenging Furies, fall on, nor spare the whole Army. And thou, O Sun! who drivest thy Chariot through high Heaven, when thou seest my Father's Countrey, pulling back thy golden Rein, relate my Misfortunes and my Death,

* *When I have slain my self.*] Gr. πλάσσειν διαρρήξασθαι. Divided my Side. It was said that *Ajax* was by *Hercules* covered with a Lyon's Skin, every where but under his Armpits. Wherefore *Æschylus* speaking of him says, that his Sword bent and could not pierce his Body, until some Goddess being present, shewed him in which Side he should pierce himself. Wherefore *Sophocles* would not contradict his Senior, but says he pierced his Side, but mentions not which Side.

to my old Father, and my miserable Mother, who unhappy, when she hears this Report, will fill the City with her Cries. But it is to no Purpose vainly to mourn these Evils, but this Business must be enterprized. O Death, Death! Come and behold me, with thee alone I will talk; and thou, O Light of this bright Day; and thou, O Sun, thou Charioteer! I call thee last and no more; O sacred Soil of my own Country of *Salamis*, O seat in my Palace, celebrated *Athens*, and Youths brought up with me, Fountains and Rivers, and the *Trojan* Land I call; farewell my Parents, this is the last Word *Ajax* saith to you; the rest I will speak among the Shades below.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

1st *Semichorus*.

Sem. Toil still increaseth Toil, whither, O whither have I not gone? No Place can tell. Alas! but lo, I hear some Noise; 'tis from the Fellow Sailors of our Ships.

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

1st *Semichorus*, and 2^d *Semichorus*.

2 *Sem.* What News now?

1 *Sem.* I have traced the whole western Side of the Fleet.

E

2 *Sem.*

2 *Sem.* Haft thou indeed?

1 *Sem.* Abundance of Labour, nought else appears.

2 *Sem.* Nor towards the Sun's rising, directing his Way, doth he any where appear to me.

Cho. Who is there of the laborious Fishermen, sleepless intent upon their Prey; or who of the Gods inhabiting *Olympus*, or the Rivers which flow into the *Bosphorean* Sea, knows, and if he hath seen, can tell of cruel hearted *Ajax*, where he wanders? It is a miserable Thing for me, in a Succession of long Labours, neither by running to approach him, nor, though weak with Search, find where he is.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

Tecmessa, Chorus.

Tec. Who is me! Whose Voice is that, which founding from the Forest, is heard as near us? Ah me a Wretch!

Cho. I see the miserable captive Bride *Tecmessa*, overwhelmed with Grief.

Tec. It is past, I am undone, I am destroyed. O Friends!

Cho. What is the Matter?

Tec. *Ajax* now is newly slain, the Sword is sheathed within his Body.

Cho. Wo to my coming! Wo is me, O King! Thou hast slain me thy Fellow Sailor. O me a Wretch, and thou unhappyy Woman!

Tec. Since it is so, it is Time to lament.

Cho. With whose Hand did the Wretch do it?

Tec. By himself he fell, it is plain; for in the Earth the Sword fixed argues it.

Cho. Wo is me, my Miseries! Thou, how great a Man, art slain, unguarded by thy Friends; I foolish, in every Thing deceived, in all Things ignorant, neglected: Where, where lies stubborn unhappy *Ajax*?

Tec. He is not to be seen, but I will cover him all over with a folded Garment; since none, tho' a Friend, can bear to see him, blowing upwards at the Nose, and from the dismal Wound, black Blood, by his own Slaughter. O me! What shall I do? Who of thy Friends will lift thee up, where is *Teucus*? How seasonable were it, if he came to take away his fallen Brother? O unfortunate *Ajax*! How great a Man thou art, and what a sad State thou art in; how worthy art thou even of Enemies to be lamented?

Cho. O wretched Man! Too plainly, alas! your Loss of Reason discovered that you would at last plunge both your self and us into these endless Woes; for in the furious Tempest of your Soul, how would you with many bitter Cries and Groans complain to me Night and Day of the Injuries of the *Atridae*? But that

Time was the beginning of Mischief, when there was a violent Dispute about the Arms of *Achilles*.

Tec. Wo is me!

Cho. The generous Sorrow wounds my Heart.

Tec. Ah me!

Cho. I wonder not why you lament, and again repeat the Sounds of Woe, lately deprived of such a Friend.

Tec. These Things but seem so to thee, but I perceive them strongly.

Cho. I agree with thee.

Tec. Ah me, my Son! unto what Yoke of Servitude must we be brought? What Tutors must we have?

Cho. Wo is me! Thou hast mentioned an ^f unspeakable Deed of the two cruel *Atridae*, in that Mourning, but may God avert it.

Tec. It is thro' the Gods that we are in such a State.

Cho. Sad and deplorable Misery they have caused, and such a Mischief the Goddess, Daughter of *Jove*, hath been the Cause of for *Ulysses's* Sake; and surely the daring Man doth injure with a traiterous Heart, and with

^f *Unspeakable Deed.*] *Gr.* ἀναιδον, the same with ἀπίστον, and both signify any Thing mysterious, and which cannot be uttered; and so it is understood by *St. Paul*, 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. Or 2dly, an ominous Word, or 3dly, any Thing foul or dishonourable, as Fornication and Uncleaness, and in this Sense it is taken here.

much Laughter ridicules the sad Misfortune of *Ajax*; alas! alas! together with the two Chiefs, the *Atridæ*, likewise hearing this News.

Tec. Tho' they laugh and rejoice at his Evils, it is likely, tho' they desire him not alive, they will lament him in Necessity of Battle. For Men of base Minds, having in their Hands a Good, know it not before they have thrown it away: His Death was more grievous to me, than pleasant and delightful to them; for what he desired to obtain, he hath obtained, the Death he longed for: What therefore can they laugh at in him? He died for the Gods, not for them.

Cho. Let *Ulysses* therefore vainly insult him, *Ajax* is no more for them; but for me he is gone, leaving me nought but Grief and Sorrow.

Tec. Wo is me!

Cho. Hold thy Peace, I think I hear the Voice of *Teucus*, loudly lamenting with a Cry agreeable to the present Misfortune.

ACT IV. SCENE VI.

Teucus, Chorus, Tecmessa.

Teu. O most beloved Brother *Ajax*, hast thou gained thy desired Death, as Fame reports?

Cho. The Man hath perished, *Teucrus*, be assured of that.

Teu. Wo is me, my sad Fortune.

Cho. Since our Case is thus.

Teu. Ah me!

Cho. It is Time for us to mourn.

Teu. O sad Affliction!

Cho. Too great, indeed, *Teucrus*.

Teu. Alas! Where is his Son? In what Part of the *Trojan* Land is he?

Cho. He is alone in the Tent, *Teucrus*.

Teu. Wilt thou not lead him hither with all Speed, lest any of the Enemies snatch him away, as the Whelp of an absent *Lyones*; go, hasten, labour; for all love to insult the Dead.

Cho. And while he yet lived, *Teucrus*, the Man desired that thou shouldest take Care of him, as thou dost.

Teu. O the most sad of all the Spectacles to me that ever I saw with my Eyes! O most afflicting of all Journeys to my very Soul, which now I came, O most loved *Ajax*, when I heard thy sad Fate, as I was in Chase of the Enemies, and searched out their Retreats; for the Report of thy Death, as by some God was quickly spread through all the *Grecian* Army, which I wretched hearing, tho' absent far, lamented. But now seeing the Thing I am undone. Wo is me! Go, uncover him, that I may see the whole Mischief; O miserable Spectacle! O desperate Audacity! What Grief thou

thou dying hast left me! [*They uncover the Body of Ajax.*] Whither is it possible for me to go? To whom? Since I assisted thee not in these Afflictions. Will *Telamon*, thine and my Father, receive me with a kind Countenance and favourable, coming without thee? How? He to whom, even being fortunate, nothing is pleasant so as to make him laugh. He, what will he conceal? What will he not say? That I a Bastard, begot of a Captive taken in War, betrayed thee by Fearfulness and Cowardice; thee, O most loving *Ajax*! or by Fraud, that thou dying, I might enjoy thy Wealth, being dead, and Throne: Such Things the angry Man, morose with Age, will say, tho' without just Cause moved to Strife: In the End an Exile I shall be banished the Land, to be a Slave instead of a free Man, through his Reproaches: This is my Case at home. But at *Troy* I have many Enemies, and few Friends. All these Things will befall me since thou art Dead. Wo is me! What shall I do? How shall I take thee from this cruel Sword? O Wretch! by what Murther hast thou expired? Thou therefore sawest that in Time, *Hector* dead would kill thee. See by the Gods the Fortune of two Men, *Hector* with the same Belt that was bestowed on him by *Ajax*, was dragged after the Chariot of *Achilles*, until he breathed out his Soul; *Ajax* having his Gift, by that suffered a fatal Death. Did not a Fury make this Sword;

and the Belt, *Pluto*, that cruel Workman? for I dare say the Gods contrive these and such Things always for Men: But to whose Opinion these Thoughts do not agree, let him maintain his own, but I approve these.

Cho. Proceed not too far, but consider how thou mayest repose this Man in his Tomb, and what thou suddenly shalt say: For I see an Enemy, and perhaps laughing at our Ills, say what a wicked Man might say.

Teu. Who is he whom thou seest coming from the Army?

Cho. *Menelaus*, for whom we undertook this Voyage.

Teu. I see him, he is not hard to be known, for he is near.

ACT IV. SCENE VII.

Menelaus, Teucrus, Chorus.

Men. Thou, I bid thee not prepare that Body for Sepulture, but suffer it to lie as it doth.

[*I bid thee not prepare that Body for Sepulture.*] It was an usual Thing with the ancient Grecian Heroes, to deny their Enemies Burial after Death; so *Achilles* punished *Hector*, and in the *Antigone* *Creon* decreed, that the Body of *Polynices* should lye exposed a Prey to the Dogs, and Fowls of the Air. And ordinarily several Persons, who by their Actions while alive, or the aggravating Circumstances of their Death, were thought unworthy of any Funeral, were so exposed, as those

Teu.

Teu. Why hast thou given out that pernicious Decree?

Men. It pleaseth me, and him who commands the Army.

Teu. But wilt thou not say what Reason thou canst give?

Men. Because we hoped we brought him from home a Friend and a Confederate to the *Grecians*; but I find him more an Enemy than the *Trojans*; who designing the Slaughter of the whole Army, a Night-wanderer, directed his Arms against us, that he might kill us; and unless some God had overthrown his Purpose, we had had the same Fortune which hath befallen him, and suffered an unhappy Fate, and he had lived: But now the God hath changed his intended Mischief, and made him fall on Flocks and Herds. Wherefore there is no Man shall have Power to bury his Body in a Tomb; but cast out on the yellow Sand, he shall be Food for

who betrayed or conspired against their Country; Villains guilty of Sacrilege, Tyrants, Persons killed with Lightning; some Offenders who suffered capital Punishment, such as were guilty of Self-Murder, &c. So that upon several Accounts *Ajax* seems to have forfeited his Right to Burial. For which Reason *Aristotle* tells us, *Ethic. Nicom. Lib. V. Cap. 2.* that his Body was not reduced to Ashes, according to the usual Custom, but privately interred; it having been declared by *Calchas*, to be a Prophanation of the holy Element to consume in it the Bodies of such as had occasioned their own Death,

the

the Sea Birds: Wherefore thou needest not to exert thy fierce Rage, for if we could not overcome him while he lived, we will entirely command him dead, though thou wilt the contrary; for living, he never would listen to my Commands. And that is the Part of an ill Man, while he is a Subject, not to listen to those who are placed over him: For in no City the Laws can well prevail, where Fear is wanting; nor can an Army be well governed, which hath neither Fear nor Awe. But it becomes a Man, tho' he be great in Body, to think that he may fall through even a small Evil; but who hath Fear and likewise Reverence, know, That Man hath Safety in himself. But when Injuries prevail, and every one doth what he will, then think this City will fall at last from Happiness, to the lowest Degree of Misery: Therefore let there be seasonable Awe, and let us not think, if we do what we please, that we shall not suffer again what may displease us; these mutually succeed each other. Before he was a flagrant Injurer, but now I take my Turn to triumph. And I precaution thee not to bury him, lest thou fall thy self into the Grave.

Cho. Menelaus, take Care, lest while you deliver those grave Maxims, you become injurious to the Dead.

Teu. I should not wonder at a Man who is mean in Pedigree, if he offends, since they who seem to be born Gentlemen offend so in their

their Words. Go, speak again from the beginning, will you not say that you brought this Man a Confederate to the *Grecians*? Did not he sail hither as Governor of himself? How do you govern him? How is it lawful for you to rule a People whom he brought from home? You came hither a *Spartan* Governor not to govern us, nor can it be that you have more right to govern him, than he to govern you. You sailed hither a Prince indeed, tho' not Governor of all, so as ever to rule *Ajax*. Therefore govern those who are your Subjects, and instruct them with those grave Speeches, but I will lay him in his Sepulchre, as it is just I should, tho' you say the contrary, or any other Commander, not fearing your Presence; for he fought not for the Sake of your Wife, as those hired for War, ^h but for the Oath's Sake by which he was sworn, not for you, for he thought none worthy for whom to come hither: Wherefore bring with you several Heralds and the Army to prevent me; for all your Noise I will not be moved from my Purpose, how great soever thou art.

Men: I like not such a Tongue in Adversity.

^h *For the Oath's Sake.]* When all the Princes were gathered together to court *Tyndarus's* Daughter, he made them all swear to fight for him who married her, if any should offer to take her away by Force.

Teuc.

Teuc. Harsh Things, tho' they be most just, are grating.

Men. This Archer seems not to think meanly of himself.

Teuc. It is not a mean Art I have learned.

Men. Greatly wouldest thou boast if you bore a Shield.

Teuc. ⁱ Even light armed I am a sufficient

ⁱ *Even light-armed, I am a sufficient Match for thee.]*
This kind of Ribaldry is beneath the Dignity of Tragedy, for it is merely added by the Poet to prolong the Scene, while he loseth the Passion proper to it. How *τοξότης* comes to be a reproachful Name will be evident from hence. Among the different Soldiers of which the *Grecian* Armies were composed, the *ψιχοὶ* or *τοξόται* seem to have been but of inferior Rank; for their Business was only to sling Stones, and shoot Arrows at their Enemies, thereby to annoy them at a Distance, but were unfit for close Battle, but those who fought with Shields and Spears, were of much higher Esteem, and generally protected the former in the Fight. For this Reason *Menelaus* call'd *Teucus* a little before tauntingly *τοξότης*, an Archer. This is apparent as from this Place, so from the Testimony of *Homer*, who tells us that *Teucus* retired behind the Shield of *Ajax* for Protection, *Il. ε. γ. 266.*

Τεῦκεσσι δ' ἔπειτα ἦλθε, παλίντοια τόξα τιλαίων,
Στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὸ Αἴαντι σάκεϊ Τελαμονιάδαο,
Ἐνθ' Ἀίας μ' ὑπεξέφερεν σάκεσσι· αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἤρως
Πατρήνας, ἱππὶ ἄρ' τιν' οἷσάσας ἐν ὁμίλῳ
Βισλῆκει, ὃ μ' αὐθι πρὶν δαμνέειν θυμὸν ὄλεσεν.
Ἀυτὰρ ὃ αὐτίς ἰὼν, πάϊς ὡς ὑπὸ μητρί, δύτκει
Ἐν Αἴαντι· ὃ δέ μιν σάκεϊ κρύπτασκε φαεινῷ.

*Teucer the ninth from these at length appear'd,
And all his Bows for certain Deaths prepar'd;*

Match

Match for thee, when thou art better armed.

Men. Your Tongue shews that your Anger is great.

Teuc. It is lawful greatly to think with Justice.

Men. Is it just that he fare well who hath killed me?

Teuc. Killed you, a grievous Thing you have spoke, tho' you are dead you live.

Men. It was God preserved me, as to him I am dead.

Teuc. Do not therefore dishonour the Gods, by whom you are preserved.

Men. Do I therefore dishonour the Laws of the Gods?

Teuc. You do, if you permit not the Burial of the Dead.

Men. Not of those who are my Enemies; that is but just.

Teu. Was ever *Ajax* your Enemy?

Men. He hated his Hater, be assured of that.

*Behind the Shield of Ajax close he stood,
Which whensoever the warlike Chief remov'd,
Around on all he casts his angry Eyes,
Threatning Destruction to his Enemies;
Whom when his Arrows wounded had, or slain,
Back he betook him to his Shield again.
So timorous Boys approaching Ills to shun,
With eager haste to careful Mothers run.*

Mr. HUTCHIN.

Teuc.

Teuc. You was his deceitful and corrupt Judge.

Men. That Matter was over-ruled by the Judges, and not me.

Teuc. So privately you may be the Cause of many Mischiefs

Men. This Talk shall turn to your Sorrow.

Teuc. No more perhaps than we shall be the Cause of your Sorrow.

Men. One Thing I tell you, this Man shall not be buried.

Teuc. I tell you the contrary, that he shall be buried.

Men. I have once seen a Man bold in Speech, urging the Sailors to sail in Winter, whose Voice you would not hear when he was oppressed in the sad Tempest, but hid under his Cloaths, lay to be trampled on by every Sailor that would: So a Storm rising from a small Cloud would soon suppress you, and your proud Speech and loud Clamour.

Teuc. And I have seen a Man with Folly fraught, who insulted his Neighbour in Adversity; and one seeing him like me, and in Anger like, said this: O Man do not abuse the Dead, if thou dost, know thou wilt suffer for it. So another who was present admonished the Wretch: I see him, and I think he is no other than you; have I not well explained this Saying?

Men.

Men. I go hence, for it were a vile Thing to be heard to contend with Words, with one whom we may restrain by Force.

ACT IV. SCENE VIII.

Teucrus, Chorus.

Teuc. Be gone, and it is a most vile Thing for me to hear a vain Man talk base Words.

Cho. There will be a Tryal of great Strife, but hasten *Teucrus*, as quick as thou can'st hasten, and prepare a hollow Grave, where he may have a spacious Monument, among Men for ever famed.

ACT IV. SCENE IX.

Teucrus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Eurysaces.

Teuc. And in due Season his Son and Wife are present, to prepare a Tomb for this dead unhappy Man. O Child, come hither, stand near, and as a Suppliant touch thy Father who begat thee, and kneel down on your Knees, holding in your Hands my Hair, your Mother's, and your own, ^k a Treasure

^k *Treasure for Supplication.*] This *ἐχέματος θησαυρός*, or supplicating Treasure, which consisted of Locks of Hair, was of the same Use as in *Oedipus* the *ἐχέματος κλάδοι*, namely to add a greater Solemnity to the Ceremonies, and gain the Favour of the Gods to which they made Supplications.

for

for Supplication, but if any one of the Army should put you away by Force from this dead Body, unburied and neglected let him lye on the Ground, quite from the Root with his whole Race extirpated, as this Hair which I now cut is held; keep him, let none move you, but down on your Knees and hold him. And you [*to the Chorus,*] approach not as weak Women instead of Men, but assist until I go and take Care for a Sepulchre, tho' none allow it.

[*Here Tecmeffa and Euryfaces kneel by the Body.*]

ACT IV. SCENE X.

Chorus, &c.

STROPHE I.

When will the Number of those long Years
have an end; those Years which I consume
in nought but the continual Toils of War in
this vile *Trojan* Land?

ANTISTROPHE I.

I wish he had first vanished into Air, or
descended to the Grave, the common Recep-
tacle of all, who shewed the *Grecians* the
Use of Arms, the sad Cause of endless Woes.
Fatal his Art has been to all Mankind.

STROPHE

STROPHE II.

He, unhappy Wretch, neither allowed me to partake of the Delights of ¹ Crowns or Cups, nor the sweet Sound of Musick, nor to pass my Time in the nightly Delights of Love: But robbed me of Love, and thus I lye neglected, my hoary Hairs being drenched in the cold Dews, the Remembrances of *Troy*.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Before martial *Ajax* was my Defence against nightly Fear and Arms, now he is oppressed with dismal Fate; what Pleasure shall I ever hereafter have? I wish I were where the imperious Surge dashes against the woody Promontory which overlooks the Sea, beneath the high Lands of *Sunium*, where we might salute sacred *Athens*.

¹ *The Delights of Crowns.*] It was a Custom with the Ancients as well to wear Crowns, as to have the choicest of Musick in their Banquets: These Crowns consisted of the choicest of Flowers artificially woven together. Hence *Hor. Lib. I. Od. 38*.

Displacent nexæ Philyræ Coronæ.

See *Dacier's* Notes upon that Ode. Here the Poet after many Turns of Raillery in the former Scene, more fit for Comedy than Tragedy, at last returns to himself. Yet the Scholiast saith, that to talk of Love as Affairs here stand, is unseasonable.


F

A C T



ACT V. SCENE I.

Teucus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Euryfaces.

Teuc. EEING the General Agamemnon furiously approaching, he seemed to me as if his angry Looks portended the reproachful Speeches which his Tongue will utter.

ACT V. SCENE II.

Agamemnon, Teucus, Chorus, Tecmessa, Euryfaces.

\ *Agam.* They tell me that thou hast freely dared to bawl out bitter Expressions against us; thou, I say, ^m the Son of a Captive: If thou hadst descended of a Mother nobly born, highly thou wouldest have boasted, and mounted aloft: Since thou, though nothing thyself,

^m *The Son of a Captive.*] Here he reproacheth Teucus with his Mother, who was Daughter of Trojan Laomedon. The Grecians called all Foreigners, especially the Trojans, Barbarians. Hence *Hor. L. II. Od. IV.*

Barbaræ postquam cecidere turmæ.

hast sided with him who now is no more, and swore that we came hither as neither Governor of the Army, or the Fleet, or of thy self; but *Ajax* was himself a Ruler, as thou sayest. Are these not sad Reproaches to be heard of Slaves? Of whom hast thou so proudly talked? Where did he go or stand where I did not? Are there no Men among the *Grecians* but him? Think you we have severely decreed the Armour of *Achilles* from *Ajax*? Yet if you think we have been partial, will it not at last suffice you being overcome, to submit to what so many Judges have decreed? But will you always maintain the old Quarrel against us by publick Reproaches or secret Frauds, tho' overcome? According to such Manners no Law can subsist, if we should repel those who overcome by Law, and make those first who are last. But such Things must be prevented. Nor are broad thick Men the strongest, but those who are wise, overcome every where. The Ox with a broad Side by a small Whip driven goes right in the Way; and I see that soon this Remedy must be applied to you, unless you will have a little Prudence, who daringly reproachest for a Man who is no more but a Shadow, and freely usest thy Tongue: Will you not at last be wise, nor consider whence you are born? Bring hither some free Man who may speak for you to us, for I under-

stand not your Speech, nor can I hear that Barbarian Voice.

Cho. I wish it were both your Minds to be wise, for I can commend nothing to you better.

Teuc. Alas! how soon among Men all Kindness for the Dead slips away, and is quite forgotten, since this Man hath not so much Remembrance of thee, *Ajax*, as to repay thy Kindness with a small Return, whom thou many Times didst defend with the Hazard of thy Life in Battle: But all those Things are gone and vanished. O thou who hast spoke many and useless Words, dost thou not remember when he coming alone set you free, when you had been inclosed by Batteries, put to Flight, and reduced to the greatest Streights in the Fight? When the Fire burned in the uppermost Seats in the Ships, when *Hector* leap'd the Trenches, who was it that dispersed the gathering Storm? Was it not he who did it ⁿ who you say went in no Danger, did he not perform those noble Acts? And when alone he met *Hector* alone, by Choice and uncommanded he opposed him. ° He

ⁿ *Who you say went in no Danger.*] This is spoke in Contradiction to what *Agamemnon* said before, *where did he go or stand?* &c.

° *He threw not in a false Lot.*] Gr. *δοκίμιον*. Primarily it signifies a Fugitive or Run-away: But here by a Metaphor it signifies a Lot, which avoids coming out of the Helmet, lest the Owner should be sent to

threw not in a false Lot, a Piece of moist Earth, but one which should first leap from the crested Helmet. This he did, and I was by, I that Slave born of a Barbarian Mother! Thou Wretch, to what didst thou refer when thou saidst so? ^P Know you not who was your Father's Father, old *Pelops*, a Barbarian and *Phrygian*, and *Atreus* who begat you a most impious Man, who laid before his Brother a Supper of his own Children; and you was of a *Cretan* Mother, with whom your Father taking an Adulterer, delivered her a Prey to dumb Fishes, and being such a one dost thou reproach me with my Descent who am born of my Father *Telamon*? Who performing the greatest Deeds in the Army obtain'd my Mother, who was of the Royal Race of *Laomedon*, a select Gift the Son of *Alcmena* gave him: And since I am well descended

undertake the Combat. The Poet alludes to a Piece of Craft which was once used by *Cressphontes*, in casting Lots for *Messene* with the Sons of *Aristodemus*; the former threw into the Pitcher a Lot made of wet Earth, that it might stick to the Bottom.

^P *Know you not who was your Father's Father.*] *Teucer* having been reproached by *Agamemnon* for his low Pedigree, like *Achilles*, returns the Reproach, and rehearses *Agamemnon's*, telling him that his Grandfather was a Barbarian, his Father a vile Murderer, and his Mother a Foreigner and an Adulteress: Whom, having been vitiated by a Servant, his Father gave to a Sailor with a Command to throw her into the Sea; but he disobeyed that Command. Her Story is in the *Cretan Women* of *Euripides*.

of two noble Parents, shall I shame those of near Kin to me, whom thou now afflicted in such a Misfortune, dost cast away unburied, nor art ashamed to speak it: Therefore assure your self of this, if you cast him away, you shall cast us & all three away: Since it is plainly better for me to die fighting for him, than for your Wife and Brother. Wherefore look to it, it no less concerns you than me, for if you injure me in aught, you will wish some Time you had been more fearful than bold to me.

¶ *All three away.*] The Scholiasts differ in their Opinions what three are here meant by *Teucer*; whether himself, *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*; or himself, *Ajax* and *Agamemnon*; or lastly, himself *Tecmessa* and *Eurysaces*. The old Scholiast favours the first Opinion; but it is not possible to conceive that *Teucer* should be so vain as to think himself able to oppose both the *Atreidae* together. *Triclinus* inclines to the second, as if *Teucer* had said, I will kill you first tho' I die in his Defence, &c. But as *Teucer* was here endeavouring to move *Agamemnon* to Pity, it is probable he would endeavour it by that miserable Spectacle of *Eurysaces* and *Tecmessa*, sitting in a suppliant Manner before the Corpse, as they had been desired to do by *Teucer*.

ACT V. SCENE III.

*Chorus, Ulysses, Agamemnon, Teucrus, Tec-
messa, Eurysaces.*

Cho. O King *Ulysses*, you are come in Sea-
son, if you are come not to increase, but ap-
pease this Strife.

Ulys. What is the Matter, ye Princes, for
from far I heard the Voice of the *Atridae*
concerning this noble Carcase.

Agam. Is it fit we should bear most vile
Speeches from this Man?

Ulys. What Speeches? For I pardon that
Man who hearing Reproaches, returns them
again.

Agam. He heard some Reproaches, for he
acted dishonourably towards me.

Ulys. What did he do to you so as to me-
rit that Affront?

Agam. He says he will not suffer this dead
Carcase to be without Burial.

Ulys. May a Friend speak the Truth, and
yet continue in his former Friendship.

Agam. Speak, for I were unwise if I allow
it not, since I esteem you the greatest Friend
of all the *Grecians*.

Ulys. Hear me now; nor, by the Gods,
suffer this Man to be cast out unpitied; let not
Violence by any Means overcome you to hate

him so much as to trample upon Justice: For this Man was once to me the greatest Enemy in the Army, since the Time I overcame in the Tryal about the Arms of *Achilles*: But tho' he is so great an Enemy to me, I would not dishonour him so as to deny, that I have proved him the greatest Man of all the *Grecians* who came from *Troy*, except *Achilles*. Wherefore it is not just that he should be dishonoured of you; for it is not him but the divine Laws you violate: It is not just to injure a great Man, tho' he be dead, not although you hate him.

Agam. Do you contend with me, *Ulysses*, about him?

Ulys. I hated him while it was just to hate.

Agam. And even dead is it not just that you insult him?

Ulys. O *Agamemnon*, glory not in Advantages not fairly got.

Agam. ^r It is not easy for a King to be religious.

Ulys. But it is a good Saying, ^s Honour is due to Friends.

^r *It is not easy for a King, &c.]* Because often Exigences of State, and Maxims of Policy, require them to act unjustly for the publick Good: Yet this so open a Confession hardly becomes *Agamemnon* himself, or any Prince to make in such a Case.

^s *Honour is due to Friends.]* Here *Ulysses* argues against *Agamemnon* by a moral Precept, as if he should

Agam.

Agam. It becomes a good Man to obey those in Power.

Ulys. Peace, then you overcome when by your Friends you are prevailed upon.

Agam. Remember to what Man thou grantest this Favour.

Ulys. This my Enemy was yet a great Man.

Agam. What dost thou do, thus to respect thy dead Enemy?

Ulys. With me Compassion overcomes Enmity.

Agam. Such are a stupid kind of Men.

Ulys. Many there be now Friends, who may hereafter turn Enemies.

Agam. Dost thou therefore like to have such Friends?

Ulys. I like not a stubborn Disposition.

Agam. Thou makest us now appear timorous.

Ulys. No, but rather just before all the Grecians.

Agam. Dost thou therefore advise me to suffer this dead Body to be buried?

Ulys. I do, and I my self shall come to this.

say, every Man ought to listen to his Friend when he counsels well, therefore you ought to listen to me: To whom *Agamemnon* answers by another, *viz.* that good Men ought to obey their Prince, so ought you to obey me, and not give your Advice.

Agam.

Agam. It is always thus, every Man labours for himself.

Ulys. For whom should I rather labour than for my self?

Agam. This shall be called thy Deed, not mine.

Ulys. According as you act, you shall every where be reckoned good or bad.

Agam. But be assured of that, that I could grant thee a greater Favour than this; but he shall, both in Life and Death, most hated be to me: But you may do as you please.

ACT V. SCENE *the last.*

Chorus, Ulysses, Teucrus, Tecmessa, Euryfaces.

Teuc. Whosoever, *Ulysses*, denies that you are a wise Man, is himself unwise.

Ulys. Now, *Teucrus*, from this Time forward I declare to you, that as much as he was before my Enemy, I am now his Friend, and desire to help to bury this dead Body, to labour with you, and leave nothing unperformed which Men owe to the greatest Heroes.

Teuc. Excellent *Ulysses*, in every Thing I commend thee, thou hast disproved my bad Opinion of thee: Tho' thou wast to him the greatest Enemy of all the *Grecians*, alone thou hast holpen him, nor couldst bear that
thy

thy self alive shouldest injure him being dead ; as that furious Commander and his Brother would have cast him forth reproached, without Sepulture. And may Father *Jove*, chief of *Olympus*, and the avenging Furies, and recompensing Vengeance, miserably destroy those Villains, as they unworthily and with Reproach would expose this Corpse: But thee, O Son of old *Laertes*, I fear to suffer to touch this Sepulchre, lest I should do what might be uneasy to the Dead ; in other Things assist us, if thou wilt: Bring any other from the Army to officiate for thee, I shall not grieve thereat: Other Things I will prepare ; thou hast discharged the Duty of a good Man towards us.

Ulys. I would have helped, but if it be not acceptable to you that I should do it, I go hence commending your Opinion.

[*Exit Ulysses.*]

Teuc. Enough of Time is past, some quickly prepare a deep Grave, others lay the tall Tripod over the Fire, to prepare the sacred Washings for the dead Body, and let one Troop of Soldiers from the Tent bear his Armour, warlike Ornaments: And thou, O Child, as well as thou can'st lovingly touch him, and raise up his Sides with me: For his Veins yet warm, send upward his black Blood. Let every one present who calls himself a Friend to *Ajax*, hasten and help
this

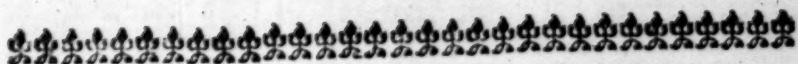
this brave Man, than whom no better lives while he survived : This I affirm.

Cho. * Even wise Men learn many Things by Experience ; but the wisest of Men are not able to foresee what will happen hereafter.

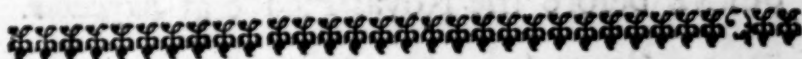
* *Even wise Men learn, &c.]* See the Notes on *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Act V. Scene the last.



THE



THE
TRAGEDY
OF
ELECTRA.



Dramatis Personæ.

Tutor to *Orestes*.

Orestes Prince of *Argos*, Son of *Agamemnon*,
and *Clytemnestra*.

Electra and *Chrysothemis* his Sisters.

Pylades Prince of *Phocis*, Friend to *Orestes*.

Ægisthus, King of *Mycenæ*, and Husband to
Clytæmnestra.

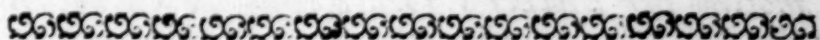
Clytæmnestra his Queen.

Chorus, composed of the principal Ladies of
Mycenæ.


SCENE before the Royal Palace at *Mycenæ*.



ELECTRA.



The ARGUMENT.

 *HE Subject of this Tragedy is Orestes's Return from Phocis, whither he had been sent an Infant by his Sister Electra from the Cruelty of Aegysthus and Clytæmnestra, and likewise the Method he took to revenge his Father's Death, by theirs who had murthered him. But the Poet calls it Electra, for the sad Complaints which that Princess makes for the Death of her Father, her Sufferings under the tyrannical Government of his Murtherers, the supposed Death of her Brother, and her excessive Joy when he is discovered to her. The other two Greek Tragedians have likewise treated upon this Subject, but their Tragedies are very different.*

This

This of Sophocles exceeds the other two, yet is it not without its Faults, but they are such as its Beauties may very well atone for. The Unity of Time, Place and Action, he well observes; the Thoughts are noble, and the Diction beautiful. The chief Fault of which the Poet is guilty, is in one Part of Electra's Character, who tho' she is represented every where as a Princess of an heroick and generous Disposition, yet such Cruelty as she expresth in promoting her Mother's Death is not at all becoming her Sex, and the Theatre is, or ought to be an Enemy to all kind of Cruelty. However Euripides is still more faulty in this kind, for his Character of her is more cruel than that of Sophocles, or Æschylus; and the Choëphori of the latter, in which he hath treated on this Subject, scarce deserved the Name of a Tragedy: But as this Art was not arrived at any great Degree of Perfection in his Time, he is excusable.

The Moral of this Fable is help'd out by the late Return of Orestes from Phocis, which was twenty Years after his Departure from Argos; which is, that though the divine Justice long defers the Punishment of the Wicked, yet it will at last overtake them; and that there are no Crimes God will punish with more Severity than Murther, Adultery, and Usurpation.



ACT I. SCENE I.

Tutor of Orestes, Orestes, Pylades.

Tutor.



Son of *Agamemnon*, who formerly lead the *Grecian* Troops against *Troy*, hence you may descry the dearest Prospect to your longing Eyes. ^a Here on the Right Hand is the ancient City *Argos*, and the Forest of the ^b mad Daughter of

^a *Here on the right Hand is the ancient City of Argos.]* The Scholiast seems to make *Mycenæ* the same with *Argos*, but they are distinguish'd by *Horace*, *Ode 7. Lib. 1.* *Argos* was the ancient Seat of the Kings of the *Argives*, and was built about the Time of the Patriarch *Jacob*.

^b *Mad Daughter of Inachus.]* *Io* is here meant, who being beloved by *Jupiter*, was by him turn'd into a Cow, that thereby she might be safe from the Jealousy of *Juno*. *Juno* understanding this, sent *Argos*, who had a hundred Eyes, to keep her; but *Jupiter* sent his sly Son *Mercury*, who killed *Argos* and turned him into a Peacock; at this *Juno* enraged, inspired *Io* with Madness, whereupon she ran into *Egypt*, and was there worship'd by the Name of *Isis*, and the Sea she pass'd over was from her called the *Ionian* Sea.

G

Inachus,

Inachus: There, *Orestes*, is the *Lycian Forum*^c of the God of Day, and there on the Left is the famous Temple of *Juno*: The City at which we are arrived is^d rich *Mycenæ*, and this is the bloody House of *Pelops's* Sons. It was from hence I took you from your Sister's Hand, to save you from your Father's cruel Destiny. Since then I have with much Care brought you up, that being arrived at this Age you might revenge your

^c *Of the God of Day.*] Gr. λυκαίων θυσ. The various Reasons assigned why *Apollo* is so called, are his being a Shepherd to *Admetus*, and so destroying Wolves, wherefore Wolves were sacrificed to him; or because that Animal was sacred to him, as the Hind to *Diana*; whence the *Argians* had Wolves stamp'd on their Money, as the *Athenians* had Owls: But the most probable Reason is this; *Apollo* is the Sun, at the Appearance of which the λυκόφως, or Morning Dawn disappears, it being of the same Colour with a Wolf. Therefore I translate it the *God of Day*. He had a very ancient Temple at *Argos*, which is here call'd Ἄλσος Λύκειος, wherein was a Fire which was said to have descended from Heaven: There were also two Temples, one in *Thebes* and another in *Athens* sacred to the same God, called Λύκεια, or γυμνάσιον Λυκείον Ἀπόλλωνος. Dr. Potter tells us, that the *Lycean Forum* at *Argos* was dedicated to him, in Memory of his delivering the *Argives* from Wolves.

^d *Rich Mycenæ.*] This Epithet is given to *Mycenæ* both by *Homer*, who calls it πολυχρυσταίη Μυκίνη, and *Horace*, who calls it *Dites Mycenæ*, Lib. I. Od. 7. It was thus enriched by *Agamemnon*; but after his Death it began to decay, and in the first Year of the 78th Olympiad, 466 Years before the Birth of our Saviour, was entirely demolish'd by the *Argians*.

Father's

Father's Death. Now therefore, *Orestes*, and you most faithful *Pylades*, we must seriously consult in a short Time what is to be done: For now the clear Light of the Sun cheers up the Morning Voices of the Birds, and the dark Night is vanished with the Stars. Before any comes out of the Palace we must join in close Debate, since we are arrived at a Juncture which admits of no Delay, but demands speedy Execution.

Orest. Thou faithfullest of Friends, and best Supporter of my sinking Fortunes, who daily shewest me some fresh Tokens of thy Affection and Tenderneſs for me! As a generous Courſer, who, tho' old, loſes not his Courage in the greateſt Extremities, but kindles into his ancient Fires; ſo you not only excite me by your Counſels, but give me your Example. Wherefore give earneſt Attention to my Words, and correct me if you find I ſpeak not to the Purpoſe. When I came to conſult the *Pythian* Oracle, that I might learn how I could take Revenge of the Murtherer of my Father, *Phæbus* gave me this Answer, which you ſhall hear. That I muſt ſteal upon him unprovided of Arms or Troops, and with my Hands take juſt Revenge, by killing him. And ſince we have heard ſo plain an Oracle, you, going when you find a favourable Opportunity, may know all that paſſeth in the Palace, that when you have ſeen all you may give us a perfect Account. For at this Age, and af-

ter so long Time since they saw you, they will not know you, nor will they have the least Suspicion of you, being thus equipped. Tell them that you are a *Phocean* Stranger, sent by a ^e Man of *Phanoteus*, for he is their chief Ally; and tell them, ^f confirming it by Oath, that you are sent to give an Account, that *Orestes* died a violent Death, ^g tumbled from his

• *A Man of Phanoteus.*] *Phanoteus* is a Village in the Neighbourhood of *Delphi*, which was formerly called *Panope*, as *Strabo* tells us. Πανοπὺς δ' ὁ νῦν Φανότης, ὁμορρε τοῖς παλαιάδαι τόποις.

^t *Confirming it by Oath.*] One might with some seeming Justice object, that *Sophocles* in these Words encouraged Perjury: But the Scholiast very well clears him from the Imputation of this Crime, in these Words. Δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν πείθει τῷ θεῷ τὸ πᾶν δόλῳ πράσσειν ἀπακλειστέον. ὥστε ἐν οἷς δοκεῖ ἐπιτελεῖν δυνάμει, διὰ τῶν δυνάμεων πειθόμενος τῷ θεῷ. For he ought to obey the God who exhorts him to do every Thing by Fraud; so that wherein he seems to act wickedly by forswearing himself, he therein acts piously in obeying the God. And thus is *Abraham* justified, when he would have offered up his Son *Isaac*; and the *Israelites* likewise, when they borrowed of the *Egyptians* Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, and spoiled them. *Exod.* xii. 35, 36,

^g *Tumbled from his Chariot.*] Here is a very considerable Fault in the Constitution of this Piece, for the *Pythian Games*, where *Orestes* is here feigned to be slain, were not instituted until five hundred Years after he was dead; this Falshood ruined the Probability of the Piece, of which it is the Foundation. *Sophocles* need only have feigned, as *Æschylus* did, that he was killed some other Way: It is true *Virgil* hath as great an Anachronism, yet the Absurdities of one do not justify those of another.

Chariot

Chariot at the ^h *Pythian Games*. Be that thy Tale. But I, after I have adorned my Father's Tomb, as *Apollo* commanded me, with Libations and Hair clipt from my Head, will come hither again, bringing in my Arms the brazen Urn, which you know is hid hard by in a Thicket, that we may more easily deceive the Assassins, by bringing them the Confirmation of the agreeable News, that my Body is burnt and reduced to Ashes. Why should it grieve me to pass for Dead, since it is plain by my Actions that I am alive, and am about to gain immortal Honour; for I am persuaded that no unfortunate Oracle can be attended with so much Advantage: ⁱ For I

^h *Pythian Games*.] They were first instituted in Honour of *Apollo*, for killing the Serpent *Python*.

ⁱ *For I have often seen wise Men, &c.*] The Scholiast tells us, that *Sophocles* in this Place understands *Pythagoras*, who inclosed himself in a Hole in the Earth, causing his Morher to give out that he was dead; and afterwards appearing, taught the Doctrine of Transmigration of Souls, confirming it by his own Example, saying, that before the *Trojans*, he was *Æthalides* the Son of *Mercury*; afterwards *Hermotimus*, and last of all *Pythagoras*. But it is not probable that *Orestes* should hint at the History of a Philosopher, who did not appear in the World until six hundred Years after his Death; some, indeed, suppose that he meant *Ulysses*, particularly *Dacier*, who in ascribing this Action to him saith. *Comme Ulyse, qui après avoir passé pour mort pendant plusieurs années, arrive chez luy, tuë les poursuivans de sa femme, & rétablit l'ordre & la tranquillité dans ses estats.* But with Submission, I must,

have often seen wise Men falsely reported to be dead, and after, when they have returned home, they were honoured more; so I promise my self Happiness, that after I have every where spread the Report of my Death, I shall appear as a Star to my Enemies, and shall still shine. But O my Father's Land, and Gods who there preside, receive me kindly in these Enterprizes; and thou, O my Father's Palace, for I come to wash away those Stains by which thou art polluted, incited by the Gods; send me not away dishonoured out of the Land, but greatly enriched, and Possessor of the Palace. I have said enough. Be it thy Care, old Man, now going away, to execute thy Charge, and we will retire; the Season is now favourable which decides all Affairs among Men.

Electra within.] Wo is me a Wretch!

Tutor. I think I hear from within the Gates^k some of the Servants weeping.

Is it not. *Orestes.* ~~This~~ poor *Electra*? Wilt thou that we stay to hear her Sorrows?

with the Scholiast, be against this Notion; for since Oracles, which were consulted on that Occasion, declared that he was alive, and would certainly return, he was not looked upon at *Ithaca* as actually dead.

^k *Some of the Servants weeping.*] The Tutor hearing *Electra* weeping, judges her to be a Servant, for neither did that Time of the Day, the Action or Place agree with a Person of her Rank, yet is it her, whereby we may judge of the Excess of her Sorrow.

The author of this excellent translation seems to have overlooked the punctuation which is not a colon but a mark of Interrogation
C. C. K. Canil.

Tutor. By no Means; we will enterprize nothing before we have performed the Commands of *Loxias*, and from thence we will begin, pouring out Libations on your Father's Tomb: These Things will gain us Victory, and Power of doing what is to be done,

ACT I. SCENE II.

Electra alone,

Elect. O sacred Light, and Air equally surrounding the Earth; wo is me! How often hast thou heard my Complaints, how many repeated Blows with which I strike my Breast hast thou seen, when the dark Night is past? For what is done in the Night, my loathsome Bed and the sorrowful Chamber are conscious of, how I lament my miserable Father, whom in a Barbarian Land cruel Death bore not away. But my Mother, and the Consort of her Bed *Ægisthus*, split his Head with a bloody Ax, as the Wood-cutters do an Oak. No Lamentation is heard from any other but from me, for you, O Father, so unjustly and miserably slain. But I will not cease from Lamentations and sad Complaints, while I behold the twinkling Stars, and while the sacred Flambeau of the Day affords me Light; but like the miserable Daughter of *Pandion* who hath lost her Young, I will make my Cries heard all around before my Father's Gates.

G 4

O House

O House of *Pluto* and *Proserpine*! ¹ O infernal *Mercury*, and sacred Execration! And ye Furies, the venerable Children of the Gods! You see those that are unjustly slain, and stolen Embraces: Come, O help me to revenge the Murder of my Father, and send my Brother to me, for alone I cannot bear this pressing Burthen of Grief.

ACT I. SCENE III.

Chorus, Electra.

Cho. O *Electra*, Daughter of a most unnatural Mother, why dost thou so inconsolably grieve, lamenting *Agamemnon*, who so long ago fell into the Snares of a most deceitful wicked Woman, and was slain by her impious Hands? May he perish who committed these Crimes, if it be just for me to say so.

Elect. Offspring of noble Parents, thou art come to comfort me in my Sorrows; I know, and am sensible, my Grief is too extravagant, nor am I ignorant of all that you can alledge, yet will I never cease to lament

¹ *Infernal Mercury.*] He was, according to the Poets, the Messenger of all the Gods, and his Office was to conduct departed Souls to their desired *Elysium*, *Hor. Lib. 1. Od. 10.*

*Tu pius lætis animas reponis
Sedibus -----*

my

my murdered Father: Wherefore my Companions, who so well repay the Kindness which I have for you, suffer me here I beseech you, to pine away with Grief.

Cho. But neither with Lamentations or Prayers shall you raise your Father from the Lake of *Pluto*, the general Rendezvous of all the World; but by this complaining you augment your Woes, and perish in those Evils for which there is no Remedy; for why dost thou abandon thy self to unsupportable Sorrow?

Elect. He must be very insensible who could forget his Father who died so miserably. But for me, my greatest Comfort is to imitate the plaintive Bird, the ^m Messenger of

^m *Messenger of Jove.*] The Swallow so called from giving Notice of the approaching Spring, or rather the approaching Day; since the Ancients called *Jupiter* the Day; according to *Macrobius. Saturn. Lib. I. Cap. 15.*

He is feigned by the Poets to have been first called *Progne*, the Daughter of *Pandion*, King of *Athens*: She married *Tereus*, King of *Thrace*, and being desirous to have her Sister *Philomela* with her to keep her Company, sent *Tereus* for her; but upon the Road he ravished her, and cut out her Tongue, lest she should discover him. But she represented the Story in Needlework so well, and sent it to her Sister, that she soon perceived her Husband's Villainy; to revenge which, she murdered their Son *Itys*, and sat him before them to be eaten; at which *Tereus* enraged, ran at her with a drawn Dagger, but she fled, and was turned into a Swallow, *Tereus* into an Owl, and *Philomela* into a

Jove,

Jove, who always laments her dear *Itys*: O most miserable *Niobe*, I worship thee as a Goddess, who turned into a Stone Sepulchre for ever weepst.

Cbo. Thou art not the only of all Mortals who hath known Sorrow; wherefore why dost thou exceed all those to whom thou art related in Excess of Grief? ⁿ As *Chrysothemis*, and *Iphianassa*, and *Orestes* kept in Private, who support their Afflictions.

Elect. O happy *Orestes*! whom in an Estate worthy thy royal Birth, the noble Land of *Mycenæ* will receive, when *Jove* shall deign to conduct him hither. I continually in this miserable State wait for him, abandoned by all the World, without Children, without Marriage, and am always wet with Tears. These are my sad Evils, but he forgets all his Sufferings, and those Accounts of mine of which I have informed him; for what false

Nightingale, and *Itys* into a Pheasant. *Hor. Lib. IV. Od. 12.*

----- *Ityn flebiliter gemens;*
Infelix avis. -----

ⁿ *Chysothemis and Iphianassa.*] *Euripides*, and other Poets, contend that *Iphigenia* and *Iphianassa* were the same, with whom *Triclinus* agrees: But, with Submission, that must be a Mistake, since the former had been sacrificed by her Father to *Diana* at *Aulis* before his Death, and *Sophocles* speaks of the latter as alive; besides, the old Scholiast cites an Author, who says, *Agamemnon* had four Children.

Message

Message does he not send? He is very impatient to see me, yet that Impatience makes him not hasten his Coming.

Cho. Chear up, dear Princess, chear up; Great *Jove* is in Heaven, who sees and governs all Things, to whom remit your excessive Anger, and be content, nor yet forget your Enemies: Time is a God which never stays, nor will the Son of *Agamemnon*, who possesses *Phocian* ° *Crifa's* verdant Bank delay his Return, nor the God who reigns over *Acheron*, his Revenge.

Elect. But much Time of my Life is gone without Hope, nor can I still preserve the least, who fade without Children, whom no Friend protects. But as a Stranger unworthy my Royal Birth, I lodge in my Father's Palace, clad with vile Garments; and know all the Extremities of Want.

Cho. O miserable Report of your Father's Return! And miserable Night when he lay in his Palace! Since there he received his mortal Wound: That cruel Deed Deceit commanded, Lust slew him; but both prepared themselves for that Crime by another; whether it were some God or Man who did it,——

Elect. O that Day which of all Days was most bitter to me! O Night! O dire Grievs of

° *Crifa's verdant Bank.*] *Crifa*, or *Crissa*, a Town of *Phocis* near the *Corinthian* Bay; it was built by *Crisfus*, the Son of *Phacis*.

a Supper when my Father was assassinated by those perfidious Wretches; my dear Father, the Blows which then they gave you, have been fatal to me likewise. O may great *Jove* grant they may suffer a Punishment equal to their Treachery; nor may they ever taste Delight, who committed so horrid a Crime.

Cho. Look that you say not overmuch, hast thou no Thought how great Evils thou bringest upon thy self? And do you not see, that by your Impatience and seeking continually to raise new Disturbances in the Palace, you only aggravate your Evils? It is dangerous to attack those invested with a regal Power.

Elect. The Greatness of the Evil forces me to it, nor am I ignorant of my Anger, I know it; but in such sad Sufferings I can never abstain from these Imprecations. From whom, O beloved Race, should I hear a comfortable Word? From whom, who thinks with any Reason? Wherefore let me alone, let me alone Comforters; these Complaints I will for ever utter, nor will I ever cease from murmuring, but for ever will lament here.

Cho. I speak with all the Tenderness of a faithful Mother, that you would not heap Sorrow upon Sorrow.

Elect. Tell me what other Evil have I to fear? How can it be well done of me to disregard the Dead? Can any one be so unnatural! If there were, I would not be honoured of those; nor, if I lived with one so meek as
should

should forgive such Wrongs, would I, in Complaisance to him, withhold from my Father his due Tribute of bitter Sorrows. But if the wretched murdered King, who is now but Earth and Nothing, lies miserably abandoned, and they suffer not a Punishment equal to their Crime; Shame is no more on Earth, nor Piety among Mortals.

Cho. I came hither, Princess, more for your Sake than my own; and if I speak not what pleaseth thee, thou hast prevailed, and I submit to thee.

Elect. I am ashamed, O dear Virgins! if I seem to you too feeble, nor better able to support my Afflictions; I cannot resist the Violence of my Evils. O forgive me! for how could any Princess well descended, seeing her Father's Evils, forbear to mourn like me? which I both Night and Day see rather growing, than decaying; to whom, first from my Mother who bore me, every Thing proceeds which is most cruel; then in my Father's Palace I live with his Murtherers, and am governed by them, am forced to ask and receive of them? Then, what Days do you think I pass, when I see *Ægisthus* sitting in my Father's Throne, and wearing the same Garments with him, and sacrificing to the Household Gods where he murdered him? And I see their last Injury, the Murtherer in my Father's Bed with my wretched Mother, if it be right to call her Mother, who is so vile as to

2

live

live with such a Villain, and fears no Fury; but as if she had nothing to do but to laugh and triumph in her Crimes, when that Day returns wherein she slew my Father by Fraud, in that Day she appoints Dances, and sacrificeth Flocks to the solitary Gods: I, unhappy Wretch, who am a Witness to these execrable Deeds, can do nought but weep and languish, and deplore the miserable Banquet called the Supper of *Agamemnon*, by my self alone; nor is it permitted me to shew that Excess of Grief my Heart would wish: For my Mother, great in Words only, raises her Voice, charging me with these Reproaches: “ O impious Wretch! “ Dost thou alone perceive thy Father’s Death? “ Is no other in Grief but you? May you “ wretchedly perish, nor may the Gods below “ ever put an End to thy Complaints”. Thus she ordinarily reproaches me, but when she hears from any that *Orestes* is coming, then bitterly she bawls out, standing before me: “ Are “ you not the Cause of this? Is not this your “ Work? Who stealing *Orestes* from my “ Arms, privately sent him to a foreign “ Land? But be assured you shall suffer a “ Punishment equal to your Crime”. Thus she talks with Impudence and Rage, and her noble Spouse being present, encourages her in this Railery; that effeminate Wretch, who is a Reproach to Mankind, who makes Wars only in Consort with Women. But I still expecting *Orestes*, the Healer of these Evils,
do

do miserably perish, and that Prince always deferring to come and execute what he hath promised me, hath ruined my present and future Hopes; in such Ills, my Friends, we can neither be wise nor pious, but they change our Natures, and force us to be bad.

Cho. Speak, tell me. Dare you speak this Language while *Ægisthus* is in the Palace, or is he gone from home?

Elect. Certainly he is absent, think not if he were at home, that I could have the Liberty to stay without the Gate, but now he is in the Fields.

Cho. If it be so, I dare with so much the more Courage join in your Discourse.

Elect. As he is absent, demand what you will.

Cho. I ask thee, what sayest thou of thy Brother, is he about returning, or doth he still continue absent; I would know this.

Elect. He tells me he will come, but doth not perform his Promise.

Cho. He who hath in Hand a Matter of great Consequence, ordinarily loves to take long Deliberation.

Elect. But I did not take long Deliberation when I saved him.

Cho. Be of Courage Princess, he is too generous to abandon his Friends.

Elect. I still hope, or I had not lived so long.

Cho. Say no more, Madam, for I see your Sister *Chrysothemis* bearing in her Hands sepulchral Offerings, which are ordinarily made to the Dead.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Chrysothemis, Electra, Chorus.

Chry. What Noise is this, Sister, you make before the Palace Gates? Hath not long Time yet taught thee to forbear this vain Satisfaction of abandoning your self to unprofitable Griefs? I am no less sensible than you of our Miseries, and if my Power answered to my Desires, I would shew what I think of them; but in the State I am in, I think it more proper to moderate my Resentments, and not to cry out Vengeance against my Enemies, when I cannot hurt them; so I would have thee do. Altho' what you judge I know is just, not what I say; yet the only Way to live free, is to obey those in all Things who have an absolute Power over us.

Elect. It is a sad Reproach that thou shouldst be born of that Father whose Daughter thou art, and yet forget him, and be so sloth-

P Moderate my Resentments, &c.] Literally translated it will be, to sail with narrower Sails. A Metaphor from Sailors, who when the Winds are violent, contract their Sails, lest their Ship should be overwhelmed.

fully

fully complaisant to thy Mother; for all these your Admonitions are learnt of her, and you say nothing from your self. Then chuse one of these two Faults, confess thou art out of thy Senses, or if thou art in thy Senses, thou desertest thy Friends, who saidst just now if thou hadst Strength, thou wouldst shew thy Hatred of them; but while I desire to use my utmost Efforts to revenge my Father, you not only assist not, but attempt to divert me from my Purpose: These Things shew your Fearfulness; wherefore teach me, or learn your self from me, what Advantage should I gain by ceasing from these Mournings? Do I not live? It is true I live miserably, but yet I live, and that is sufficient for my self. I am troublesome to those perfidious Wretches, and by that Means afford Pleasure to my dead Father, if there be any Pleasure among the Dead. And you who boast you hate them, in Word alone you hate; your Actions shew your Words are false, who pass your Life with your Father's Murtherers: For me, I can never submit to them, tho' any one would give me those Gifts with which you are so much delighted; let a rich Table stand before you and your Life roul in Pleasure; but let that only be my Food, not to do Things so mortifying. I desire not to enjoy your Honour, and were you prudent you would renounce it: But now while you may be called the Child of the best of Fathers, you are called your Mother's; so that in this betraying your dead

H Father,

Father, and your Friends, to all the World you will pass for a wicked Woman.

Cho. Nothing in Anger, by the Gods, since you might both profit by each other's Words, if you knew how to follow her Counsel, and she yours likewise.

Chry. I am accustomed, Ladies, to hear these Discourses from her; nor would I again have urged her to repeat them, but I heard some great Mischief is like to befall her, which will restrain her from making these tedious Complaints.

Elect. Speak, tell me what Mischiefs; if thou wilt tell me any greater than these I suffer, I will not contradict thee.

Chry. Then hear the Sum of what I have to tell; they will, if you cease not from these Mournings, send you there where you will never see the Light of the Sun, but alive in a subterraneous Prison, an Exile from this Earth, you shall chant out your Misfortunes; wherefore look to your self, nor blame me at last when the Evil is come; it is still soon enough to be more prudent.

Elect. This then is what they resolve to do with me.

Chry. Yes, when *Ægisthus* comes home.

Elect. O that therefore he would return with Speed for my Sake.

Chry. Why, O Wretch? What hast thou wished for?

Elect.

Elect. That he would come home, if he designs to do what you say to me.

Chry. What, that you may suffer so cruel a Punishment? Whither do thy Thoughts lead thee?

Elect. To fly as far as possible from them and you.

Chry. Have you no Care of your present Life?

Elect. My Life is so happy that I have Reason to admire it!

Chry. It would be so if you knew how to be wise.

Elect. Teach me not to be traiterous to my Friends.

Chry. I teach you not, but to submit to those in Power.

Elect. Submit to them your self as long as you will, it agrees not with my Character.

Chry. But that is good Counsel which would direct you not to fall through Rashness.

Elect. If we must fall, we will fall in revenging our Father.

Chry. Believe me, my Father would pardon us all these Complaisances.

Elect. These are Discourses which wicked Persons only will approve.

Chry. Will not you then follow my Counsel?

Elect. By no Means, I am not so void of Sense.

Chry. Then will I go whither I was sent.

Elect. Whither wouldst thou go? To whom dost thou bear these Sacrifices?

Chry. My Mother sends me to offer Libations on the Tomb of my Father.

Elect. What hast thou said? What to him whom above all Men she hates?

Chry. Whom her self slew, that you would say?

Elect. Who gave her this Counsel? Whom doth that Act oblige?

Chry. I believe some Terrors, caused by a Dream she had last Night, put her upon it.

Elect. ¶ O! the Gods of my Father, assist me immediately.

Chry. How doth that Terror raise you up any Hopes?

Elect. If you will tell me the Vision, then I will tell you that.

Chry. I can say but little.

Elect. But speak it, for often short Speeches have ruined and raised up Men again.

Chry. 'Tis the Report, she thought our Father returned again into the World, and then seizing his Sceptre which once he bore, but now *Ægisthus*, planted it in the middle of the Palace; and that a green Branch grew from it, wherewith the whole Land of *Mycenæ* was

¶ *O the Gods, &c.]* *Electra* hearing of the Vision which appeared to *Clytæmnestra*, she prays that now at last the revenging Gods would shew their Power, and revenge the Death of *Agamemnon*, which that Vision seem'd to presage.

overshadowed: These Things a certain Person who was present heard, † when she told her Dream to the Sun. I know no more than this, but that she sends me on Account of this Fear. Now, by the Gods which preside over this Land, I beseech you listen to me, nor fall by Imprudence; for if now you reject my Counsel, afterwards you will be forced to submit, when you feel the severe Scourge of high Displeasure.

Elect. But, O beloved Sister, lay none of those Things on the Tomb which you have in your Hands, nor is it just or pious to bring Funeral Sacrifices or Libations from a Woman that is an Enemy to your Father: But hide them deep in the Dust, or throw them away to the Winds, where none of them ever shall come to my Father's Sepulchre, that these Treasures may be preserved for her under the Earth until she dies: For consider, I pray, if she were not the most insolent of Women that ever lived, would she have adorned his Tomb whom she killed, with those hostile Libations; or ‡ seems it just to you that

† *She told her Dream, &c.*] It was a Custom with the Ancients, if they dreamed an unlucky Dream, to tell it to the Sun in the Morning; which, as it was opposite to the Night, they thought would avert any Evil which that Dream might bring: Strange Superstition!

‡ *Seems it just to you, &c.*] It appears by these Words, that the Ancients thought Men retained the same Affections after Death, which they had enter-

our Father should favourably receive these Gifts upon his Tomb, from her by whom, after she had basely murdered him, † her Arms were stuck with Pieces of Flesh cut from him? And who, to wash away the Guilt

tained when alive: This farther appears from the Story of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Oedipus's* Sons, who having killed each other in a single Combat, and being burned in the same Pile, the Flames of their Bodies would not unite; but by parting from each other, demonstrated their immortal Hatred when living.

Bianor's following Epigram informs us of this.

Ὅιδ' ποτὶ παῖδων, Θίβη τάφῳ, ἀλλ' ὁ παρώλης,
 Τύμβῳ ἔτι ζώντων αἰσθάνεται δοράτων.
 Κείνης ἔτ' αἰδὴς ἰδαμάσσατο, κῆν' Ἀχέρονι
 Μάριαν, κείνων χῶι τάφῳ ἀντίπαλῳ.
 Καὶ πύρι πῦρ ἤλειξε σπασίον. ὦ ἱλκεστοί
 Παιῶδες, ἀχοιμήτων ἀψάμφοι δοράτων.

*Within thy Walls, O Thebes, two Brothers lie,
 Who, tho' deceased, cease not their Enmity;
 For from their Bodies on the Pile do fly,
 Enraged Corpuscles jussling in the Sky;
 With pointed Fury eagerly they meet,
 Then in Aversion scornfully retreat.
 Unhappy Youths, by Fates deny'd to have,
 The peaceful Slumbers of a quist Grave.*

There is a Passage in *Virgil* to the same Purpose, *Æneid. VI. v. 655. ----- Eadem sequitur tellure repostos.*

So here *Electra* argues, that as *Agamemnon*, tho' dead, had Reason to hate *Clytæmnestra* who had so barbarously murdered him, it is but reasonable to think he would detest any Offerings paid by her on his Tomb.

† *Her Arms were stuck with Pieces of Flesh.*] It was usual for those who slew others to achroterize, or cut
 of

of Murther, had the Courage to "wipe her bloody Hands upon his wounded Head? But dost thou think these Libations will free her from the Guilt of the Slaughter? It cannot be; but quit your Design, and cutting from your Head the Ends of your Hair, join with it that little which I have left to testify my wretched State: These Gifts are but small, yet such as I have. And with my Hair, offer likewise my Girdle, not enriched with Ornaments of Gold, and falling down before him, pray that he may come from the Earth a friendly Assistant against our Enemies, and send *Orestes* alive with a superior Power to attack them; that hereafter with richer Gifts we

off Pieces of the Outfides of the Flesh of the Party slain, and fix them under their Armpits, which would, as they supposed, disable him from sending Furies from the Dead to revenge the Murther. The Word which denotes this Action, *Sophocles* takes from *Æschylus*, who hath the Word *ἰμαχαιδον*. Thus was *Deiphobus* used by *Helene*, as we read in the sixth *Æneid* of *Virgil*.

*Deiphobum vidi lacerum crudeliter ora,
Ora manusq; ambas, populataq; tempora raptis
Auribus, & trujcas inhonesta vulnere nares.* DACIER,

" To wipe her bloody Hands.] Another Superstition much like the other was, that the Murtherer always took Care to wipe his bloody Sword and Hands, in the Hair of the Person slain, thinking with the Blood to wash away likewise all the Guilt of the Crime. This resembles the Action of which *Solomon* speaks, *Prov. xxx. v. 20.* *Such is the Way of an adulterous Woman, she eateth and wipeth her Mouth, and saith, I have done no Wickedness.* DACIER.

may crown his Tomb, than what we now bestow. For I am persuaded that his Care for us obliged him to send these Dreams which have filled her with all this Horror. Wherefore, Sister, join your self to me, labour for me and yourself, and that most beloved of all Men which is now in the Grave, our common Father.

Cho. This Maid speaks piously, and thou, if thou art wise, wilt follow her Counsel.

Chry. I will follow it, for when your Demand is just, I have no Reason to oppose it, but to hasten to Action. I will keep this as a Secret, and adjure you, my Friend, to do the same, for if our Mother hears it, this Attempt will be fatal to me.

ACT I. SCENE V.

Chorus.

^u STROPHE.

If I am no mistaken Prophet, nor deprived of all my prophetick Light, the Goddess

^t *Strophe*, &c.] These Words *Strophe* and *Antistrophe*, so often mentioned, denote the Movements of the *Chorus* in singing; when they sung the *Strophe*, they turned from the Right Hand to the Left; and when the *Antistrophe*, they turned from the Left Hand to the Right: The *Chorus* was divided into two Parts or Semi-chorus's, as among the *Hebrews*, the Right Hand Troop began and advanced toward the
of

of Vengeance comes who always knows her Time, her Hands are armed with Power and Justice, and very soon too you will see her. The agreeable Recital of this Dream gives me this Confidence, for it is not possible that your Father King of the *Grecians* should forget the Treatment he received, nor that old brazen Axe which slew him with most cruel Blows.

ANTISTROPHE.

But the brazen footed Fury will come with an hundred Feet and an hundred Hands, though now concealed in Darkness, and will punish those wicked Wretches for their criminal Marriage, a Marriage which a horrible Assassination preceded. Wherefore I am persuaded that the Aiders and Abettors of this Crime will feel the Effects of this Dream. For humane Predictions are of no Force to interpret dreadful Dreams, or divine Oracles, if this Night's Phantasm bring not to us some good Effect.

EPODOS.

O most unfortunate Chariot Race of *Pelops*! How unhappy thou wert to this Land,

Left, and (according to the Division of the Theatre) this was the *Strophe*; and when that had done, the Left Hand Troop turned toward the Right, that was the *Antistrophe*. The *Epodos* is what the *Chorus* sang last, till they sang again after the next Act.


for

for ever since that fatal Moment in which
 " *Myrtilus* with such Indignity was quite
 tumbled down from his Chariot, and thrown
 into the Sea, this House hath been plunged
 into numberless Calamities.



ACT II. SCENE I.

Clytæmnestra, Electra, Chorus.

Clyt.  OU seem to walk about with
 Liberty enough, because *Æ-*
gisthus is not at home, who
 always restrained you, lest
 when you are out, you reproach your Friends.

" *In which Myrtilus.*] This *Myrtilus* was Son of
Mercury and Coachman to *Oenomaus*, who being cor-
 rupted by *Pelops* with the Promise of Part of his King-
 dom contending in a Chariot Race with *Oenomaus*, cau-
 sed the Chariot Wheel in which his Master rode to be
 so loose that it flew off, whereby he fell down and
 broke his Neck. But *Pelops* ill rewarded him for his
 Treachery, for taking him with him when he stole
Hippodamia and carried her into *Peloponnesus*, in their
 Journey he threw him headlong into the Sea.

The Scholiast therefore says, that *Mercury* reveng'd
 this Baseness of *Pelops* to his Son upon all his Descen-
 dants. It appears by this Passage and several others,
 that the Pagans believed this Truth, viz. That God
 would punish the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the
 Children unto the third and fourth Generation.

NOW

Now as he is absent, you respect not me, nor cease to tell all the World that I abuse my Power; that I treat you and yours with Indignity. I do you no Injury, but reproach you, being forced thereto by your Reproaches against me. Your only Pretence is, that I have slain your Father; it is true, and know it was well done, and I deny it not: Justice slew him, and not I alone, whom it was fit you should help if you were wise, because this your Father, whom you always lament alone of all the *Grecians*, had the Barbarity to sacrifice your own Sister *Iphigenia*, not considering a Mother's Throws which Fathers feel not. Pray tell me for what Cause, for whose Sake he sacrificed her? Will you say it was to pleasure the *Grecians*? What Right had they to demand my Childrens Blood? Or for his Brother *Menelaus*? Why should he kill my Children for him, and not therefore suffer Punishment? Had not ^x *Menelaus* two

^x *Menelaus two Children.*] i. e. *Hermione* and *Nicostratus*, tho' *Homer* allows him to have had but one, viz. the former; but it is an usual Thing with the Poets to contradict each other to serve their Purpose. As what different Tales do they tell concerning the Fate of *Ajax* Son of *Telamon*? Some saying that he was kill'd by *Paris*; others that he was by the *Trojans* so overwhelm'd by Stones and Clay that he dy'd, they having been inform'd by the Oracle that he was invulnerable by Sword; others, with whom *Sophocles* agrees, say he kill'd himself: No less Variety is there in the Relation of the Fate of *Antigone*, every Poet making

Children

Children, who it was more fit should die than mine, being descended of that Father and Mother for whose Sake this Expedition was undertaken? Had *Pluto* more Desire to devour my Children than *Helen's*? Or will you say that wretched Father had no Love for my Children, but *Menelaus* loved his? Do not these Sentiments declare him unnatural? I think so. If I speak different from your Opinion, your dead Sister would speak no other Language if she could speak. My Conscience doth not reproach me for what I have done, but if I seem to you to think amiss, tho' my Cause I think is just, convince me of my Error with Respect and by solid Reasons.

Elect. You shall not say now that after I began to affront you with reproachful Terms, you only answered me again in the same kind. But if you will permit me, I would answer for my dead Father, and for my Sister, and contain my self within those Bounds you have prescribed me.

Clyt. I permit you, for if you had always begun with me with this Moderation, you had not heard those dismal Reproaches you complain of.

Elect. Then I speak; you say you kill'd my Father, and what more base Confession can be made, whether you kill'd him justly or

use, among the various Traditions, of that which best suited with his Purpose.

not? But I shall tell you that it was not Justice which arm'd you against him, but the Persuasion of a wicked Man, with whom you now live. Examine *Diana* who presides over rural Sports, for whose Punishment she bound our Fleet in the Port of *Aulis*. I will tell you, for from her we cannot know it: My Father (as I hear) one Day diverting himself at the Forest of the Goddess, rais'd up with his Feet a spotted Deer; in killing it he boasted, and happen'd to put out some vain Word, and from that *Latona's* Daughter taking Offence, stopt the *Grecians* in the Port that my Father might sacrifice his Child for a Recompense of the Beast, for such were the Sacrifices of that Goddess: Nor was there Freedom to be purchased upon other Terms for the Fleet to go home, or to *Ilium*: Wherefore my Father, being forced by hard Necessity, after much Resistance sacrificed her, not for the Sake of *Menelaus*. But if, (for I will speak your Purpose) willing to oblige his Brother he sacrificed her, was it fit that he should for that Reason die by your Hand? By what Law? Take Care lest by establishing such a Law among Men, yourself have not Reason to repent, and that Law be fatal to you: For if we may kill one for another, you your self would first, if you had Justice, die: But this is only a false Pretext to serve your own Purpose. If you will tell me, I pray, what is it that now obliges you to
lead

lead a shameful Life, receiving to your Bed that Villain, by whose Aid you kill'd my Father, and get Children, but reject the former legitimate Children, who were descended of Parents lawfully join'd in Marriage? How can I approve these Actions? Or will you say this that, it was to revenge your Daughter? Can you say that without a Blush? Is it becoming you to marry our bitter Enemy to revenge your Daughter? One may not admonish you, but you report every where that we revile our Mother. As for me, I esteem you no less my Mistress than my Mother, who live a miserable Life, and am immersed in many Evils which proceed only from you and from your Consort: But the other which is at a Distance, with Difficulty escaping your Hands, sad *Orestes* leads a miserable Life. You often reproach me that I saved him that he might one Day punish you, and revenge my Father: O! If I were able, I had done it, assure yourself of that: Wherefore, if you will, declare it to all the World that I am the most wicked of all Creatures, the most abusive, the most impudent; if I have all these Qualities what can they say of me but that I resemble you.

Cho. I see the Princess in great Fury, but whether her Fury be just or no, I know not.

Clyt. What shall I think of her who hath treated her Mother with so much Indignity?
And

And at this Age hath spoke with this Impudence. Do you not think that she is capable to do the worst of Deeds without a Blush?

Elect. You mistake me, assure yourself, that I am ashamed of those Speeches, tho' I seem not to you to be so, I understand that such Language is very indecent in my Mouth, but your Hatred towards me, and your Actions force me to speak it; for ill Deeds are learnt from ill Ones.

Clyt. O impudent Wretch, do I and my Deeds make you speak this Language?

Elect. It is from you not me these Discourses proceed, you commit these Actions, and these Actions produce these Discourses.

Clyt. But by *Diana* I swear this Impudence shall not escape unpunish'd when *Ægisthus* comes home.

Elect. You see how you are overcome with Rage, tho' you gave me leave to say what I would, you have not Patience to hear me.

Clyt. Wilt thou not suffer me to sacrifice in Peace, since I have permitted thee to say thy Pleasure?

Elect. I exhort you to do it. Sacrifice, nor complain that I interrupt your Prayers, for I will say no more.

Clyt. Thou who art present [*to her Maid*] bring Offerings of all Sorts of Fruits, that I may lay on this Altar suppliant Sacrifices to *Apollo*, to deliver me from those Terrors with which I now am seized. Now, O *Apollo*,
lo,

lo, whose Image is worshipped before the Gates of this Palace, hear my secret Prayers which I address to you, for I am here among mine Enemies: Nor is it fit to reveal all my Thoughts when she is near me, lest out of Spirit of Hatred and Calumny she spread a vain Report thro' all the City. But hear me who address my self to thee; if those Spectres which I have seen this Night, ^y these doubtful Dreams, O *Lycian* King, be happy, grant that they may be accomplished; but if unfortunate, return their Effect upon my Enemies, and suffer them not to cast me ^z from my present flourishing State, if any contrive to do it; but here for ever grant I may enjoy

^y *These doubtful Dreams.*] Gr. *διὰ τῶν ὀνείρων*, aluding either to the two Gates of Sleep, *viz.* the Horn and Ivory, (for those Dreams which entred at the former, were supposed to be ominous of what would certainly come to pass; the other on the contrary were reckon'd vain and of no Effect.) Or, *secondly*, to two Visions she had seen, namely, that for which she sent *Chrysothemis* to make Libations and Offerings on the Tomb of *Agamemnon*, and that for which she prays to *Apollo*; or, *thirdly*, to the Doubtfulness of the Dreams.

^z *From my present flourishing State.*] Here is a very lively Representation of the precarious State of the Wicked, for *Clytemnestra* here thinks herself in a most flourishing Condition, when she had not an Hour to live; but is to die in a cruel Manner by the Hands of her own Son: So when the Wicked think themselves most secure and say Peace, sudden Destruction comes upon them.

perfect

perfect Health, and an uninterrupted Course of Prosperity, possess the Palace, and sway the Sceptre of the *Atridæ*, pass a quiet Life with my Friends with whom I am now, and with my Children who have no Ill-will towards me, nor importune me with their sad Complaints. Hear our Prayers, O *Lycian Apollo*, propitiously, and give us all other Things which we ask; for I am persuaded that being a God, thou art capable of knowing what I ask for in Silence. Since *Jove* is your Father, it is impossible your Eyes should not penetrate the most hidden Secrets.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Tutor, Chorus, Clytæmnestra, Electra.

Tut. • You Ladies of this Land, how can I certainly be informed? Is this the Palace of King *Ægisthus*?

• *You Ladies of this Land, how, &c.*] Here comes in the Tutor, with his feign'd Story of the Death of *Orestes*, kill'd in the *Delphick* Games, which Story tho' feigned, is beautiful in its Place, and fit to strike an Audience with a tragical Horror, for Men are not only desirous in general to know of the Death of any great Man, but likewise the particular Circumstances how he came by it. As to the Part of *Clytæmnestra*, it comes very *à propos*, the Moment she had ended her secret Prayers to *Apollo* for the Death of *Orestes*, and *Electra*.

I

Cho.

Cho. Stranger, it is, thou hast indeed rightly judged.

Tut. And is this his Queen? For her majestic Air and Garb import she is no less.

Cho. It is true, she is the Queen.

Tut. Hail Queen! I come to bring agreeable News, both to you and to *Ægisthus*, from a Friend.

Clyt. I receive the happy Omen, but desire to know who sent you.

Tut. One of *Phocis* of the Town of *Panope* hath sent this important News.

Clyt. What, Stranger? Speak: Since you are from a Friend, I know well you will speak nothing but what is agreeable.

Tut. In short, *Orestes* is dead.

Elect. Wo is me a Wretch, I am undone this Day.

Clyt. What sayest thou, Stranger? What sayst thou? Hear not her.

Tut. I say now, and said before, that *Orestes* is dead.

Elect. I die a Wretch, I am no more.

Clyt. You mind your own Affairs. But, Stranger, tell me without Disguise in what Manner he died.

Tut. For that I was sent, and will speak all to the smallest Circumstance. He coming to the famous Assembly of the *Grecian* Youths to join in the *Delphick* Games, no sooner heard the Voice of the Herald loudly proclaiming the Foot-Race, in which they first contended,

contended, but he presented himself at the Barriers, shining with such a God-like Lustre, that he gained the Respect and Admiration of all Beholders: And as his Person was glorious to behold, so were his Actions; for he bore away the glorious Prize of Victory. I cannot, Madam, give you a perfect Account of all the Actions of this Prince, nor was I witness to them; but this one Thing I say, that he returned victorious in the ^b five Conflicts which the Heralds proclaim'd according to the Custom, and was celebrated with the loud Acclamations of the People who called him *Orestes* the Prince of *Argos*, the Son of *Agamemnon*, who once raised a famous Army of *Grecians* against *Troy*: This was his Success. But when the Gods resolve to afflict any, he cannot even who is strong escape: For the next Day when the Sun arose, which was the Day of the Chariot Course, he entered with ^c many other Charioteers. When the Judges of the Game threw Lots, and rang'd in order the Chariots by those Lots, the Signal given by the Sound

^b *The five Conflicts.*] Gr. πένταθλα, viz. leaping, throwing Quoits, casting Darts, running and wrestling. *Simonides* hath comprized them all in one Verse,

Ἄλμα, ποδωκείω, δίσκον, ἄκοντα, πάλλω.

^c *Many other Charioteers.*] Here I miss a few proper Names which I thought to be of small Importance, which I hope the Reader will excuse.

of a brazen Trumpet, the Combatants rush'd forth, they likewise calling to their Horses, shook the Reins in their Hands. The whole Plain was fill'd with the Noise of rattling Chariots, the Dust was likewise rais'd, and all mixed together, they nothing spared their Spurs that every one might out-run his Rival to get before the Breath of his Coursers, which breath'd on them; and the Breath of the Horses mixed with Dust rais'd such a Cloud, that it quite hid their Chariots from our Sight. But the young Prince near the last Pillar still turn'd his Axle-tree, and for that Purpose letting go the Horse *Siræus* on the Right Hand, stop'd the other. Heretofore every Chariot kept its right Order, until the unruly Horses of the Prince of *Thrace* by Force bound forward, and by making many Turns, meet Face to Face with the *Libyan* Chariots, and from this Confusion one rush'd forward, and met another. In a Moment this Mischief was general, the whole *Chrisæan* Field was fill'd with Wrecks of Horses. But an ingenious *Athenian* Charioteer seeing this, turns aside his Reins, and stopping his Chariot made it stand still, thereby to avoid that Confusion of Horses, which perfectly resembled a Ship-wreck in a tempestuous Storm. But *Orestes* being arrived at the last Column, whose Horses were in the last Rank, was confident he should gain Victory. As he saw this young *Athenian* the only

ly one that could dispute the Prize, he made a smart Noise about the Ears of his swift Horses, follows up, and both driving up, equalled the Horse Manes of each other; now one, now another outstript each others Chariot; and miserable *Orestes* directed right his other Courses, his Chariot still entire, until slackning the left Rein, while the Horse turn'd himself, imprudently he struck against the last Column, broke the Naves of the Axletree, and falls down from his Chariot; by his Reins is drag'd along, and falling on the Ground, his Horses in a furious Manner pursue their Course. But when the Multitude saw him fallen from his Seat, they mourned the Youth whose Fate after having given such Proofs of his Conduct and Valour was to suffer such Ills. Now is he born along the Ground, now he rais'd up his Legs toward the Skies, and the Charioteers who ran with him after many Effort's restraining the Race of his Horses, loos'd his miserable Body, which was so bloody and so disfigured, that none of his best Friends could know him; and presently burning him on a Funeral Pile, certain Men of *Phocis* appointed to that Purpose bear the sad Remains of his Body in a small Urn, that he may obtain a Sepulchre in his Father's Countrey. This is the News I tell you, and even the Recital is afflicting, but we, who were Witnesses of the Spectacle,

have been forced to avow that we never saw any Thing so terrible.

Cho. Alas, it seems the whole Race of our ancient Kings is quite extinct.

Clyt. O *Jupiter*, what is this, shall I call it fortunate or evil! I see it is profitable however; but that I preserve my Life by my Evils, is a dismal State.

Tut. Why, Madam, are you so concern'd at this News?

Clyt. Is any Thing so powerful as Nature? For when we have brought Children into the World, for the very worst Treatment we cannot hate them.

Tut. As it seems, we came hither in vain.

Clyt. Not in vain. How doest thou speak in vain, since thou art come to me; bringing certain Signs of the Death of a Son, who, forgetting that he was born of me, departed from my Breasts, which gave him Milk, and tender Education, and liv'd an Exile with Strangers; of a Son, who, since he departed hence, never returned to see me, and accusing me for his Father's Murther, with dreadful Threats so afflicted me, that neither Night nor Day Sleep closed my Eyes, but every Moment I look'd upon my self as a Victim prepared for Slaughter; but this Day I am freed from Fear both from *Orestes* and *Electra*; for this Daughter was my greatest domestick Evil, drinking my Heart's Blood; but now
quiet

quiet, even from *Electra's* Threats, I shall lead my Life.

Elect. Wo is me a Wretch: Now, *Orestes*, is it Time to deplore thy Calamity, who even in the State thou art in, provest the Severity of a barbarous Mother. By the Gods this is not well!

Clyt. Not what you expected, but as he does, he does well.

Elect. ^d Hear, *Nemesis*, the dead Prince, who appeals to you.

Clyt. She heard whom she should, and hath done them Justice.

Elect. Now insult over us, Fortune hath favoured you.

Clyt. Will *Orestes* and you never cease these Menaces?

Elect. We will not only cease, but will submit to you.

Clyt. I cannot sufficiently express my Obligations to you for silencing this importunate Wretch.
[To the Tutor of *Orestes*.

^d *Hear Nemesis the dead.*] *Nemesis* is supposed to be the Goddess whose particular Care it is to punish all Injuries which the Living do in Words or Deed against the Dead; thus in the fifth Act *Ægisthus* after having expressed his Joy for the News of *Orestes's* Death, restrains his Transports by these Words: *εἰ δ' ἔπειτα Νέμεσις, ἡ λίσσῃ.* Wherefore *Callimachus* in his Hymn of *Ceres*, speaking of the Insolence of *Erisichthion* says:

Νέμεσις δὲ κατὰν ἐν γράψατο φωνάν.

Nemesis hath recorded this insolent Speech.

Tut. Therefore since all Things are well, I have nought to do but to return.

Clyt. By no means; that were poor Recompence for the Pains you have taken, and the Service he did us who sent you, to let you return so quickly; but go into the Palace, and let her without mourn the Evils of herself and her Friends.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Electra, Chorus.

Elect. What say you, my Companions? Think you she sadly grieved, sent out a Sigh, or shed one Tear for her Son, who met his Fate in a cruel Manner? No, but the Wretch departed laughing. Woe is me poor Maid! O dear *Orestes*, who dying hast destroyed me; thou art gone and hast born to thy Tomb with thee the only Hope I had, that you would sometime come to revenge my Father and deliver me; but now whither must I go? I am alone deprived of you, and my Father too, and reduced to the State of a Slave to my bitterest Enemies, the Murtherers of my Father. Ye Gods how am I fallen? But for the future I will not cohabit with these Monsters. I will go and cast myself before this Gate, where deaf to the Voice of Comfort, I will wither out my Life: And if the Possessors of the Palace are tired in seeing and hearing me,

me, let them kill me; why should I desire to preserve that Life which only serves to prolong my Miseries?

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Chorus, *Electra joins with the Chorus.*

Elect. * Where are the Thunderbolts of Jove? Where is the bright Sun? Are they quiet, and overlook these Things? Alas, alas!

Cho. Why weepest thou Princess?

Elect. Alas!

Cho. Do not exalt thy self, but wait God's Leisure.

Elect. Thou undoe'st me.

Cho. How?

Elect. If thou wilt bring me any hope to comfort me, under the Loss of those who are certainly dead, while I languish, thou wilt be but more troublesome, and augment my Woes.

* *Where are the Thunderbolts.]* The Chorus in the former Act comforts *Electra* with Hopes of *Orestes's* Return, saying, *Cheer up, O Child, great Jove is in Heaven, &c.* but now driven to despair by this Message, and seeing *Clytæmnestra* indecently rejoice at it, doubts whether there be a God to suffer such Things.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Cho. † I know King *Amphiaraus* being hid was betrayed by the Deceit of a Woman for a golden Bracelet, and now among the Dead.

Elect. Alas! alas!

Cho. With an immortal Soul he reigns.

† *I know King Amphiaraus.*] The Story of *Amphiaraus* is thus; he was a very skillful Soothsayer, and when *Adrastus*, King of the *Argives*, would assert the *Theban* Crown to his Son-in-law *Polynices*, he was desirous that *Amphiaraus* should accompany him to the Wars; but he knowing that the War would be fatal to him, declined going, and hid himself lest he should be forced to go, his Wife *Eriphyle* only being conscious to it. But *Adrastus* his Wife *Argia*, bribed her with a golden Bracelet adorned with Gems, and made by *Vulcan*, for which she discovered where he was, whereupon he was taken by Force to the Wars. When therefore he understood it would certainly be his Ruin, he charged his Son *Alcmaeon* to kill *Eriphyle*, which he did accordingly, for which he was tormented with Furies so that he died, and *Amphiaraus* was swallowed up alive in the Earth. This Story *Horace* hints at as an Instance, to shew the invincible Power of Riches,

————— *Concidit Auguris*
Argivi domus ob lucrum.

The *Chorus* here, to comfort *Electra*, compares *Agamemnon* to *Amphiaraus*, that as he is honoured among the Dead for his Knowledge in the Art of prophecy, so will the other for his warlike Exploits: To which *Electra* answers to this Purpose, the Case is different, for *Amphiaraus* had a Revenger of his Death, viz. *Alcmaeon*, but my Father's is lost in *Orestes*.

Elect.

Elect. Alas!

Cho. Alas indeed, for that Wretch perished.

Elect. Was not *Eriphyle* punished therefore?

Cho. Doubtless.

Elect. I know it well, for there was one who severely reveng'd the Sufferings of *Amphiaraus*; but I have none to revenge my Father's, but he whom I had is ravished from me.

STROPHE.

Cho. Princess the most unfortunate that ever liv'd.

Elect. Alas, I know but too many Sorrows; their Number and Duration too well I have learnt.

Cho. We know the Cause of your Lamentation.

Elect. Do not endeavour to comfort me.

Cho. What say'st thou?

Elect. There is no hope, my Friends, for he is gone in whom my Hopes were placed.

Cho. Fate attends all Mortals.

Elect. And must all meet that Fate by being drag'd along by Reins, like that poor Prince?

Cho. An unforeseen Misfortune.

Elect. Why not? Since he died in a strange Land, where I could not pay him my last Offices.

Cho. Alas, alas!

Elect. Nor had he the Honours of Sepulture from me, nor have I shed Tears on his Tomb.

ACT



ACT III. SCENE I.

Chrysothemis, Electra.

Chry.



MOST loved Sister, & I am so transported with Joy, that I forgot the Rules of Decency, and came with Speed: For I bring you most pleasing News, and declare an End of all those Evils which heretofore you suffered.

& I am so transported with Joy, that I forgot.] Chrysothemis returning from the Tomb, having offered her own and Sister's Hair, and finding the Libations poured out by *Orestes*, and the Bunches of Hair, and that Variety of Flowers; proves by a probable Reason, that *Orestes* must be come, since that Sort of Libations could neither have been offered by *Clytæmnestra*, *Electra*, or her self. This Argument is answered by *Electra*, by giving *Chrysothemis* an Account of the Message of his Death, and that she believed some body had placed there this Hair, &c. as Monuments of dead *Orestes*. For thus *Triclinius* explains the Word, *Μνημεῖ 'Ορέστου τμηθεὶς ὁ βόσρευχ' ἡ κεφαλῆς δ' ἀπὸ τινος ἡ ἀντὶ τοῦ φίλου, ἐπετίθη τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ἵνα τις ὁρῶν αὐτὸν κείμενον, εἰς μνήμην ἀφικνησάτω 'Ορέστου.* i. e. A Lock of Hair cut from the Head of some of his Friends, was put upon the Sepulchre of *Agamemnon*, that it might put any one who should see it lie, in Mind of *Orestes*.

Elect.

Elect. Where can you find a Remedy from our Evils, for which it is not possible to find a Cure?

Chry. *Orestes* is with us. I believe that it is as true as that you see me.

Elect. But thou art mad, my Sister, and laughest at thy own Ills and mine.

Chry. No, I swear by our Father's Palace, I speak not these Things to insult over your Afflictions, but know he is present with us.

Elect. Ah me! Of whom have you heard this News to which you put such Faith?

Chry. I received it from none but my self, having seen certain Signs of his Arrival, which I cannot doubt.

Elect. And what certain Signs have you seen? What have you found, that you cheer your self with such vain Hopes?

Chry. Now by the Gods listen to me, and when you have heard what I have to say, then you may call me wise or simple.

Elect. Speak therefore, if you find any Pleasure in speaking.

Chry. I will inform you of all I know. When I came to the Sepulchre of my Father, I saw Milk fresh poured, flowing in plenteous Streams, and his Repository round about adorned with all Sorts of Flowers. Being surprized at the Sight, I looked round lest any Man should observe me. When I saw all Things in a profound Silence, I approached nearer the Tomb; and the first Thing I saw
was

was a Bunch of Hair newly cut. No sooner I perceived this, but the Image of my Brother, whose dear Remembrance I always preserve, which is present with me in my Dreams and Imaginations, made me think it his Hair. Then taking it up in my Hands, I spake no ill boding Word, but Tears of Joy ran down my Eyes, and I was convinced, as I am still, that these Ornaments could not come from any but himself. For with whom doth it agree but you and I to offer such Libations? I did not that I know, nor you; for how could you offer them, to whom it is not permitted to leave the Palace^h and go to the Temples of the Gods without Punishment? Nor doth our Mother's Disposition incline her to offer such Kind of Libations; nor if she did it, could she conceal it. Therefore doubtless these Ornaments could not come from any but *Orestes*. Therefore, Sister, be of Courage, for the Gods do not always take Pleasure in our Sufferings; heretofore our Evils were without Parallel, but this Day will probably be a Forerunner of much Happiness to us.

Elect. O the Folly! How I pity thee!

^h *And go to the Temples.*] The Wicked always think that God is ready to revenge the just whom they have injured, if they pray to him; therefore the Murthe-
rers would not permit *Electra* to go to the Temple, lest the Gods, hearing her Prayers, should take Ven-
geance on them for the Murther of *Agamemnon*.

Chry. What is the Matter? Is what I have said disagreeable to you?

Elect. You know neither where you are, nor where your Thoughts wander.

Chry. Why should I not know what I saw with my Eyes?

Elect. He is dead, thou Wretch, and the Deliverance he promised us is vanished; expect it not from him.

Chry. Wo is me! of whom did you hear this News?

Elect. From a Man who was present with him when he died.

Chry. Where is he? I am in such an Amazement that I cannot express it.

Elect. He is at home, and causeth our Mother a great deal of Pleasure.

Chry. Wo is me a Wretch! By whom were those Funeral Offerings placed at my Father's Sepulchre?

Elect. I suppose that some body placed there the Monuments of dead *Orestes*.

Chry. Unhappy as I am, I running with Joy brought this Message, not knowing in what Misery we are overwhelmed: But no sooner I am come, but have found, besides those former Evils, others which oppress us.

Elect. You see what State we are in; but if you will follow my Counsel, you will soon ease us of the Burthen of our present Ills.

Chry. Can I raise the Dead?

Elect.

Elect. That is not what I said, I am not so unwise.

Chry. What do you command which I can promise to perform?

Elect. It is only to have the Courage to follow my Counsel.

Chry. If it be for our Advantage, I shall not refuse it.

Elect. You know that without Industry nothing prospers.

Chry. I know it, and will take what Share in the Task my Strength will permit me.

Elect. Hear now what Proposal I make you. As to our Friends you know we have none in the World, but Death hath deprived us of them, and we are left alone. So long as I heard my Brother flourish'd, I had Hopes that he would sometime come to revenge the Murther of my Father; but now since he is no more, I look to you, that seconding my Efforts, you would not refuse to kill *Ægisthus* the Author of my Father's Death. It is no longer Time for me to conceal from you my Design: Why will you continue slothful? And what well grounded Hopes can you now have? You have no other Comfort but to lament your past Felicity; you have nought now but Grief, and will miserably drag the remaining Part of your Life unmarried, nor need you hope that *Hymen's* Flambeau ever will blaze for you; for *Ægisthus* is not so inconsiderate a Man as to suffer your Race and
mine

mine to flourish, which would infallibly punish his Crimes: But if you will follow my Counsel, first you will shew the World that you preserve for your Father and your Brother, those Sentiments of Piety which you ought to have; then, as you were born, so you shall hereafter be called free, when you shall obtain a Husband worthy of the Daughter of great *Agamemnon*; for good Actions attract the Eyes of all Mankind. Do you not discern what a Reputation you will acquire by obeying me? For what Citizens or Strangers seeing us, will not give us these or the like Encomiums? Do you see, Friends, those two Sisters, who by their Courage raised their Father's Houses? Who by exposing their own Lives, revenged themselves, and slew their Enemies in a Time when they were most powerful? It is fit we all respect them, it is fit that all should honour them in our solemn Feasts, and in all the Assemblies of the People, we are obliged to respect their Virtue. Such Things will all the World say of us, so that dead or alive, Glory will never forsake us. Wherefore, dear Sister, be persuaded, do your Father this Service; arm your self for your Brother, deliver me from these Evils, deliver your self, and remember this, that it is a Thing unworthy those who are nobly descended to live a servile Life.

Cho. In such Enterprizes Prudence is necessary, both to him that speaks, and him that hears.

K

Chry.

Chry. That is true, Ladies, and if she were in her right Senses, she would have proved it by better guarding her Expressions before she spoke; what do you pretend to by arming your self with this Audacity, and calling me to your Help? Have you forgot that you are a Woman, and not a Man, that your Power doth not answer that of your Enemies? Good Fortune daily favours them, but hath deserted us, and quite left us destitute. Do you think it possible to enterprize the Death of *Ægisthus*, and that they who enterprize it can escape unpunished? Therefore take Care lest these Discourses which you hold should bring upon us greater Ills, if any should chauce to hear them: All that boasted Reputation will stand us in little Stead, if after we have gained it, ingloriously we die. You will say Death is not to be feared; it is true; but when we court it, Life must be our Lot. Therefore I beseech you, before we quite perish, and destroy our whole Race, moderate your Anger, and I will keep Secret all that hath been said: For your Part be more wise, and remember your Weakness, and let Time teach you to submit to those who are more powerful than yourself.

Cho. Submit, for there is no greater Gain that Men can get, than Prudence and good Sense.

Elect. You have said nothing unexpected, for I knew well that you would not fail to re-
ject

ject my Proposal; but yet however hazardous is that Enterprize, I will perform it with my own Hands; nor will I abandon my Father.

Chry. Alas, I wish you had had the same generous Sentiments when our Father was assassinated; you had prevented our Miseries.

Elect. I was always of the same Disposition, but weaker then in Spirit.

Chry. Study to be always of that Spirit.

Elect. You only give me this Advice, because you will not join with me.

Chry. It is fit those who undertake to do ill Deeds, should do them alone.

Elect. Your Prudence I love, but hate your Fearfulness.

Chry. I will do my Endeavour to hear you, since you commend me.

Elect. But you shall never have any Commendation from me.

Chry. There will be Time enough to prove that.

Elect. Be gone, for I can find no Help in you.

Chry. You might, if you could learn it.

Elect. Go, and tell all that hath pass'd to your Mother.

Chry. I do not hate you so much as to do you so bad an Office.

Elect. Consider to what Dishonour you would bring me.

Chry. Not to Dishonour, but to Care for your own Safety.

Elect. Must I then submit to your Decisions?

Chry. When you are more wise, then I will submit to yours.

Elect. How sad is it for one who speaks so well, to act so ill?

Chry. The Reproach returns upon your self.

Elect. What! do you think I speak not with Justice?

Chry. But sometimes Justice is pernicious to its Executor.

Elect. ⁱ I cannot digest those Maxims.

Chry. If you will now act according to your own, hereafter you will have Cause to commend mine.

Elect. I will pursue my Enterprize without Regard to what you say.

Chry. Is it your Resolution? Will you reject my Counsels?

ⁱ *I cannot digest those Maxims.*] *Electra* rejects this Answer of *Chrysothemis*, and with a great deal of Reason; for to observe strict Justice in every Instance, is certainly the greatest Injustice, according to that Maxim, *Summum jus summa injuria*. So *Electra* thought, that how strict soever the Laws might be against Murder, yet it agreed well with the Laws of Nature and Reason to revenge her Father's Death, by killing his Murderers.

Elect.

Elect. Nothing is more pernicious than bad Counsel.

Chry. You seem to mind nothing that I say.

Elect. It was not to Day, but long ago I made this Resolution.

Chry. I go hence therefore, for neither dare you commend my Words, nor I your Humour.

Elect. Go, I will never hereafter communicate my Designs to you, what Endeavours soever you use to persuade me, for it is a great Folly to mind vain Things.

Chry. If you think your self wise, think so still; but when you have increased your Evils by your Imprudence, then you will commend my Counsel.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Chorus, STROPHE I.

^k Why, seeing the very Birds in the Air carefully providing Nourishment for their Pa-

^k *Why seeing the very Birds.*] The *Chorus* seeing the Impatience of *Electra* to revenge her Father's Death, commends her Courage, but blames the Cowardice of *Chrysothemis* for forsaking her in so great a Danger; but according to the usual Manner of the *Chorus*, doth not directly charge *Chrysothemis* with Inhumanity, but obscurely hints it; and shews that *φιλία*, or natural Love of near Relations for each other, is a Law im-

reus who gave them their Lives, do we not act according to their Examples? But by *Jove's* Lightning and celestial *Themis*, long they shall not be unpunished. O! Fame, so much revered of Men and the infernal Inhabitants, proclaim the lamentable Voice to the *Atridae* among the Dead, and discover these their Reproaches.

ANTISTROPHE I

That now at home all Things are in Disorder with their Children, the two Princesses of their Family cannot live together, but are in cruel Diffension. That *Electra* alone, abandoned by all the World, exposed to a Thousand Dangers, and always mourning the Murder of her Father, as the ever lamenting Nightingale, is not concerned to die, but is prepared to surrender her Life, so she may have the Satisfaction to make those two Criminals fall as Victims to her just Revenge;

press'd on the Minds of all Creatures, which she in this Instance had broke. There is nothing more fit to shew the degenerate Manners of Men, who act without Respect to the Laws of Nature which should bind all Creatures, than to shew that even the Brutes Love and cherish their Kind.

Sed jam serpentum major concordia, parcit

Cognatis maculis similis fera. ----- Juv. Sat. 15.

for

for what Princess of noble Race could live in
such a State?

STROPHE II.

For no generous Person in Adversity will
purchase Life at this Price, by defacing his
Glory and his Reputation to live in Shame
and Infamy: Princess, the miserable Life you
have always led, and the continual War you
have made against their Crimes, ought to gain
you this double Praise, that you are the wisest
and the noblest of Children.


ANTISTROPHE II.

May you live in Power and Riches above
your Enemies, as much as now you are crush-
ed under their Power, since you have the
Courage to oppose your Evils; and by your
Piety towards the Gods have bore away the
Prize, in that which is the most sacred Thing
among Men.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

Orestes, Pylades, Chorus, Electra.

Orest.  Adies, have we been rightly informed? Doth this Way lead us where we desire to be?

Cho. Where? What Place do you seek for?

Orest. *Ægisthus's* Palace.

Cho. Thou art come right, and hast had some skilful Guide.

Orest. Which of you, Ladies, will tell those within of the agreeable News of our Arrival?

Cho. Let the Princess, since it is fit a Relation should tell it.

Orest. Go in, Madam, and tell that some *Phocians* desire to see *Ægisthus*.

Elect. Wo is me! Do you bring a Confirmation of that Report which we heard?

Orest. I know not the Report you speak of, but a certain old Man *Strophius*, sent me to speak something about *Orestes*.

Elect. What is it, Stranger? How my Fears seize me!

Orest. We come to bring the Reliques of the dead Prince, in that small Urn which you see.

Elect.

Elect. Wo is me! Now the Thing is plain,
I can doubt no more of my miserable State.

Orest. If you mourn the Death of *Orestes*,
know that his Body is in that Urn.

Elect. Generous Stranger, let me by the
Gods, if that Vessel contains him, take it in
my Arms, that I may lament and mourn my
self, and all my Family, with these Ashes.

Orest. Grant her Request, you that carry
the Urn, let her be who she will; for it is
not out of Hatred she urges this Request, but
she is one of his Friends, or some near Rela-
tion.

[*Electra taking the Urn in her Arms.*] ¹ O
sad Monument of the most beloved of Men
to me, the Reliques of my dear *Orestes*!
How different are the Hopes in which I now
receive you, from those in which I sent you
out? Now I carry thy Ashes in my Hands,
but I sent thee from home strong and in
Health. How do I wish you had been slain,
before I formed a Design to hide you, and
send you into a strange Land to save your
Life, that in that Day you had died, and

¹ *O sad Monument of the most.*] This Part of the
Fable is very moving of the Passions, for as upon hear-
ing the passionate Complaints of *Electra*, and for so
just a Cause we must needs grieve with her; so are we
affected with equal Joy when she is surprized with the
agreeable News, that the Person she speaks to is her
Brother. And thus in *Homer*, *Penelope* grieves for
Ulysses, while he is present with her.

shared one common Tomb with your Father. Instead thereof in a foreign Land an Exile, in a most cruel Mannner you have perished without your Sister to pay you her last Offices; nor had I the sad^m Consolation

^m *Consolation with my loving Hands to wash your mangled Corse.*] The Custom of washing dead Bodies, and anointing them with precious Ointment and Oil, is very ancient, and was used in Greece long before Homer's Time. Thus they anointed Patroclus,

Καὶ τότε δὴ λούσαντο, καὶ ἔλειψαν λίπ' ἐλάφι.

It is true, no other Material is here mentioned but Oil, or any where else in Homer, who frequently mentions this Custom. Yet Athæneus will allow of no Distinction between this Oil, and μύρον; Or Ointment properly so called. The Greeks received this Custom from the Phœnicians, and the Romans received it from the Tuscans, who were originally Tyrians. We read in Ennius.

Tarquinii corpus bona fœmina lavit & unxit.

So in Virgil Æneid. 9. the Mother of Euryalus is introduced, making the same Complaints for her Son, which Electra doth here.

----- *Nec tua funera Mater
Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi.*

*What Pangs of Grief my throbbing Breast invade,
To think thy mangled Carcass was not laid
Forth on its Pile by me; Oh, sad Surprise!
That I wa'n't by to close thy beauteous Eyes;
Just as th' expiring Soul did take her Flight,
Into the Regions of infernal Night!
Oh! Had I wash'd each Wound, each sever'd Vein,
When thou scarce cold laidst weltring on the Plain!*

Mr. Abell,

with

with my loving Hands to wash your mangled Corse; ⁿ nor have I collected your sad Remains out of the funeral Pile, as it was fit I should. Now, dear Prince, Strangers have given thee these Marks of their Piety, and this Day have brought thee in a small Urn. Wo is me! How unprofitable was the pleasing Care I took to bring you up? Nor did your Mother love you more than I,

Servius hath well remarked, that all the Care of preparing the Dead for Burial, belonged to near Relations, but, especially to the Mother or Sister; who for that Reason were called *Funereæ*, *nam apud majores funereas dicebant eas ad quas funus pertinebat, ut Sororem, Matrem.*

POTTER DAC.

ⁿ Nor have I collected your sad Remains out of the funeral Pile.] The Original is, ἥτε παμφλέκη πυρὸς ἀνελόμην, ὡς εἰκός, ἅβλιν ἐάσας. Which the Cambridge Edition printed A. D. 1665. and another at Frankfort, 1549. both falsly render, *neque in ignem juxta morem levavi miserum cadaver.* This Mistake will appear plainer by taking Notice of the following Custom of the Ancients, which was thus: After the Body of the deceased was burned on the Funeral Pile, they collected the Bones and Ashes. Thus *Homer* says the Brother of *Hector* did at his Funeral. *Il. ω. v. 792.*

————— Ἀυτὰρ ἔπειτα
ὅς τ' αἰ λούκα λήγοντο κασίγνητοὶ ἱταροῖ τε.

*His Brothers then, and Friends search'd every where,
And gathered up his snowy Bones with Care.*

Mr. Congreve.

This Office *Electra* mourns here, that she had not performed to *Orestes*.

nor

nor was your Education the Care of any other in our House but my self; I was always called your Sister. Now all those Things are gone in one Day, dead with you, and the Storm which carried you away hath ravish'd with it all my Hopes. My Father is gone, you have follow'd him, and I go to join you: Yet our Enemies laugh, our unnatural Mother cannot resist her Transports of Joy. How many Times have your private Letters made me hope that you would come and punish her? But our miserable Fortune hath prevented you from executing your Promise, who hath sent you to me, instead of your lovely Form, Ashes and a vain Shadow. Wo is me! O miserable Body! Alas, O most loved Brother! Alas the Day that ever I sent you into *Phocis*! How have you destroyed me! You have destroyed me, O dear Brother. Wherefore receive me into that Urn with thee, permit my Dust to be mix'd with yours, that hereafter I may ever dwell with you; that as we have had the same Destiny during our Lives, we may have the same Tomb after Death; for I see the Dead do not suffer those Ills, which afflicted them during their Lives.

Cho. Consider, *Electra*, you was born of a mortal Father, *Orestes* too was mortal, wherefore give not yourself up to unprofitable Woes. Must we not all die?

Orest.

Orest. ° Alas, what shall I say? How am I perplexed? I can no longer be silent.

Elect. What Sorrow is this which labours for its Vent? Why say you so?

Orest. Is this *Electra*, that celebrated Beauty?

Elect. ¶ It is the same, you see what Remains of her.

• *Alas! what shall I say, &c.*] The Remembrance here is double, for *Electra* first makes herself known to *Orestes*, by her excessive Grief for the supposed Death of her Brother, and afterwards he is known to her by a certain Token. The first Remembrance, as it arises naturally from the Incidents, and doth not appear to be invented, is certainly most ingenious, yet it is much inferior to the Remembrance of *Oedipus*, for there is no Peripetie or Change of Fortune; for when they both remember each other, they do not yet change their Fortune until the Murtherers are slain. But that of *Oedipus* not only ariseth more from the Foundation of the Subject, by a Train of the most natural Incidents, but is produced in the very Moment of the Peripetie. *Electra's* Remembrance of *Orestes* hath still less Art, which *Sophocles* used only for want of Invention, for the Mark which he makes use of to discover himself, which he calls *στυγνίδα παλῆς*, as it is used on set purpose, and not produced by Chance or a Train of Incidents, hath very little Ingenuity in it. For the Poet makes *Orestes* say what he pleases, and none contradicts him, and he might as well have said any other Mark, and none could have opposed it.

¶ *It is the same.*] This seems more fitly to be spoken by the *Chorus*, otherwise *Electra* would seem to commend her own Person, and besides as the *Chorus* answered before, and confirm'd the Tutor of *Orestes* who thought *Clytemnestra* to be the Queen by her gorgeous Habit; so by a Parity of Reason, when *Orestes* doubts here whether this be *Electra*, being so disfigur'd, he is satisfy'd by the *Chorus* that she is; tho' most Editors suppose *Electra* to make this Answer.

Orest. Wo is me for thy too rigorous Fortune !

Elect. Why, Stranger, dost thou thus lament for me ?

Orest. O Princess, whom unworthy Treatment hath so changed !

Elect. I am the very Wretch which you lament.

Orest. Alas ! thy unfortunate State. [*Weeps.*

Elect. Why, generous Stranger, dost thou look on me thus and weep ?

Orest. How little have I known of my Misfortunes ?

Elect. How do you know them by what I have said ?

Orest. Seeing you overwhelmed with numberless Sorrows.

Elect. You have seen but the smallest Part of my Sorrows.

Orest. How is it possible to see any Thing more grievous ?

Elect. I am obliged to live with Murderers.

Orest. Whose ? What Evil is that you inform me of ?

Elect. Those of my Father ; then I serve them as a Slave.

Orest. Who forces you to that sad Extremity ?

Elect. She is called my Mother ; but is nothing like a Mother.

Orest. By what means, by Force, or refusing you the Necessaries of Life ?

Elect.

Elect. By Force, ill Maintenance, and all the bad Treatment she can devise.

Orest. Have you no Person to assist you?

Elect. None: Him whom I alone expected you have brought here reduced to Ashes.

Orest. O unfortunate Princess! thy sad State moves me to Pity for thee.

Elect. Be assured thou art the only Man that ever pitied my Miseries.

Orest. Alone I come to testify the Grief I feel for all your Misfortunes.

Elect. Art thou one of our Relations?

Orest. I would tell if I could assure myself of the Fidelity of these Women.

Elect. You may assure your self, they are my ever faithful Friends.

Orest. Then quit the Urn, that you may hear the better.

Elect. Generous Stranger, by the Gods force me not to lay it down.

Orest. Submit to me, and you will not do amiss.

Elect. Now I conjure you, take not away those most beloved Reliques.

Orest. I say I will not leave them with thee.

Elect. Ah me a Wretch! O dear *Orestes*, you still augment my Evils if they wrest from my Hands your Ashes.

Orest. Conceive better Hopes, you afflict yourself unjustly.

Elect. How do I afflict myself unjustly, if I deplore my Brother's Death?

Orest. But your Brother refuses your Tears.

Elect. Am I then unworthy to deplore my Brother's Death?

Orest. You are unworthy of nothing; but these Complaints are not in Season.

Elect. Why not in Season, since I bear the Body of *Orestes*?

Orest. But it is not *Orestes's* Body, it is only feigned to be so.

Elect. Where then is the miserable Prince's Sepulchre?

Orest. No where, the Living hath no Sepulchre.

Elect. What say'st thou?

Orest. The Truth.

Elect. Doth he still live?

Orest. Yes if I am alive.

Elect. And are you he?

Orest. Behold this Mark of my Father, then judge if I say true.

¶ *Behold this Mark.*] Gr. σφραγίδα πατρὸς, there are various Opinions what this Mark should be. *Triclinius* says it was the Ivory Shoulder which the Gods gave *Pelops*, and appeared afterwards upon his Descendents; others call it δακτύλιον, or, a Ring; another Scholiast contradicts both these Opinions, and says it was σφραγίδα, ἢ γὰρ τὴν χαρακτῆρα τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ σώματι τὴν καὶ πάντα ὅμοιον τῷ ἐμῷ πατρὶ Ἀγαμέμνονι, the Mark, that is to say, the Make of his Face, and of the rest of his Body, every Way like to my Father Agamemnon's. The first Opinion is most probable, both because a Recognizance made by a natural Mark is much better than any

Elect.

Elect. Most happy Day.

Orest. I witness it is most happy.

Elect. Do I at last hear thy Voice, my
Orestes?

Orest. My Sister, doubt it not.

Elect. Do I hold thee in my Arms?

[*Embraces him.*]

Orest. And may this be an Earnest of the
Pleasure you will ever have by my Presence.

Elect. Most loved Companions, behold
Orestes, preserved alive by those Arts which
had reported he was dead.

Cho. We see him, Princess, and at this E-
vent, so unexpected, a joyful Tear falls from
my Eyes.

Elect. My dear *Orestes*, at last you are
come, you have found, you see whom you
desired to see, and who waited for you with
so much Impatience.

Orest. I am, but wait in Silence, my Si-
ster.

Elect. Why?

Orest. It is better to be silent, lest any in
the Palace should hear you.

Elect. No, by the ever chaste *Diana*, I
will never fear the Women of this Palace;
they are a vile Troop, who are only a useless
Burthen to the Earth.

foreign or acquired one; and because several Families
had such natural Marks by which they were distinguish'd
from those of any other: As the Descendants of *Cad-*
mus a Lance, the *Seleucides* an Anchor.

L

Orest.

Orest. But take Care ; you have experienced that there is in Women sometimes a martial Mind.

Elect. Alas ! you have called to Remembrance an Evil that is too plain to be disputed, and which we can never forget.

Orest. I know all that : But when it is a proper Season we will talk of these Things.

Elect. It is always Time for me to speak with Justice, for I never yet curb'd myself; and what should silence me now I am free ?

Orest. I say that too, but endeavour to preserve that Liberty.

Elect. What must I do ?

Orest. It is not now a proper Time to use many Words.

Elect. Who should oblige me now to be silent, since you are come in so miraculous a Manner, when I had lost entirely all Hopes of seeing you.

Orest. You see me now, when the Gods ordained that I should come.

Elect. You have said something which gives me more Joy than your Return : If God moved you to come to *Argos*, then I suppose your Arrival is the Work of a divine Power.

Orest. I would not forbid you to suppress your Joy : But I fear lest you be over-much transported.

Elect. O thou, who after so many Years Absence, hast at last happily return'd to me,
since

since thou hast found me in so bad a State drowned in Tears, do not ——

Orest. What shall I not do?

Elect. Do not deprive me of the Satisfaction which I find, in testifying the Pleasure I have of beholding you.

Orest. Doubtless, nor would I suffer another to do it.

Elect. Dost thou permit me then?

Orest. How can I hinder you?

Elect. My Friends, I heard the unexpected News of the Death of my *Orestes*, and mourned with secret Grief, nor did I interrupt with my Complaints the Recital of his Death; but now I have you, I enjoy your most beloved Presence, which I could not forget even in my Afflictions.

Orest. Omit these superfluous Speeches, and teach me not that my Mother is wicked, nor how *Ægisthus* at home exhausts our Father's Wealth, which he unjustly hath ravished from us, your Talk may deprive us of the proper Season of Action: But instruct me what is proper to be done this present Juncture, whether, to revenge our selves of our Enemies, who triumph in our supposed Misfortunes, we had best appear openly, or lie concealed. But chiefly beware lest our Mother should discover any Mark of Joy in your Countenance when we enter into the Palace, but lament as for that false Report of my Death; when we

have effected our Enterprize, then will it be Time to rejoice and laugh with Freedom.

Elect. My Brother, I shall ever take Pleasure in what will be most agreeable to you. It is very just that I should obey you; since it is from you, not from my self, that all my Happiness proceeds, nor would I purchase to my self the greatest Treasures by giving you the smallest Pain; that would not be to accommodate my self to my present Fortunes. But knowest thou what passeth in the Palace? Why not, hearing *Ægisthus* is not at home, but our Mother is alone within, you need not fear that she shall see in my Countenance any Marks of Gaiety, for an old Hatred glow'd in me against her, and since I have seen thee, I will not cease to weep Tears of Joy. For how can I refrain who after I had received you dead, see you alive? And you have affected me with such unexpected Joy, that if my Father should return to Life, I would not think it a greater Miracle, but believe I see him: And since therefore thou art arrived here so unexpectedly, do whatsoever your Reason shall dictate. For me, tho' I were alone, I would not have fail'd in both these Things, but would gloriously have delivered my self, or gloriously have died in my Enterprize.

Orest. Be silent, pray, I hear a Noise, somebody comes out of the Palace.

Elect.

Elect. Enter, ye *Phocians*, you bring a Message which no Body will reject, but will not long rejoice that they received it.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

Tutor, Orestes, Pylades, Electra, Chorus.

Tut. Most imprudent as you are: Have you no Regard for your Lives? Are you entirely void of common Sense, and do you not know that you are not only near, but even enclosed in the greatest Dangers? Unless I had posted my self at this Gate to prevent any Person from hearing, your Designs had been in the Palace before your Bodies; but I have prevented that by my Care. Wherefore put an end to those long Speeches, and these Transports of Joy, and come in speedily; it is dangerous to delay in such Enterprizes. Come along, it is now the very Juncture for us to effect what we have begun.

Orest. What will be the Consequence if I go in?

Tut. Very good, for none there knows you.

Orest. It seems then you have told that I am dead.

Tut. You pass with them for one of those among the Dead.

Orest. Do they rejoice therefore? Or what do they say?

Tut. I will tell you when we have done, but she seems to be most happy, who is least so.

Elect. By the Gods, my Brother, tell me who this is.

Orest. Do you not know him?

Elect. I have not the least Idea of him.

Orest. Know you not into whose Hands you once deliver'd me?

Elect. To whom, what dost thou say?

Orest. He to whose Hands I was sent into the *Phocian* Land thro' your Providence.

Elect. Is this he whom alone of many I found faithful, when my Father was murdered?

Orest. This is the same, enquire no more.

Elect. O Day most beloved, O only Saviour of the House of *Agamemnon*, how did you come? Are you he who saved him and me from many Evils? O most beloved Hands, always so assisting to us! O how happy is your Arrival! Why so long when you were here did you conceal your self from me, nor make your self known? How had you the Courage to give me a thousand Deaths by your Discourses, while you had in hand Enterprizes most delectable to me? Hail Father! For I seem to behold my Father: Hail! for know that as I hated you the worst of all Men, so I love you in one Day.

Tut. Enough, Madam, these Moments are too precious; we shall have Time enough to entertain you with this Subject. Now, Princess, it is Time we hasten to Action. Now *Clytæmnestra*

tæmnestra is alone, and no Man is within the Palace. But if you let so favourable an Opportunity escape, prepare to oppose the Strength and Skill of greater Numbers than these.

Orest. Wherefore, my *Pylades*, this Affair requires no long Discourses, but let us go in, that this Business may be done as quick as may be, after we have worshipp'd our Father's Gods who are placed here before the Palace Gates.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Electra, Chorus.

Elect. O King *Apollo*, mercifully hear their Prayers, and mine likewise, who often stood before you to present with a liberal Hand such Offerings as I could present you with, in my Misery, and who come still to Day with the same Disposition to present the same Sacrifices, that is to say, my Prayers, my Vows and Supplications. Now, O *Lycian Apollo*, I prostrate my self in your Presence, and beseech you to be ready to assist our Enterprize, and shew Men that Punishment which the Gods reserve for their Impiety.

STROPHE.

Cho. You see how *Mars*, who breaths nought but Blood and Slaughter, walks along; the inevitable Furies which pursue evil Acti-

ons are in the Palace; so that my Predictions are not vain, but will soon be accomplished.

ANTISTROPHE.

For the young Prince, armed to revenge the Dead, enters into Possession of his Father's wealthy Palace, having in his Hands the avenging Sword newly drawn; † but *Mercury*, the Son of *Maia*, surround him with a dark Cloud until the Work is done. Vengeance is ready, and will soon be compleated.



ACT V. SCENE I.

Clytæmnestra, Electra, Chorus.

Elect.



Y dear Companions, the Princes presently will achieve their Enterprize; but be silent, make no noise.

Cho. Why, what are they now doing?

† *But Mercury, the Son of Maia.]* He is esteem'd the God of Deceit and Fraud, whence he is called δολος, the Deceiver. *Homer* in the last *Iliad* supposeth *Priam* by his Conduct to have passed over all the *Grecian* Camp, until he arriv'd at the Tent of *Achilles*.

Elect

Elect. * She is providing all Things necessary for the Funeral Supper of *Orestes*; but they stand close by her.

Cho. Wherefore did you rush out?

Elect. To guard least *Ægisthus* on a sudden should come undiscerned.

Clyt. [Within.] Alas, alas, the Palace is deserted of Friends, and full of Murderers.

Elect. Somebody cries within; do you not hear, my Friends?

Cho. Alas! I have heard what I cannot hear without Trembling and Horror.

Clyt. Wo is me! *Ægisthus*, where art thou?

Cho. Somebody cries again.

Cly. O Son, Son, pity her who bore you!

Elect. But he had no Pity from you, nor had he who gave him Life.

Cho. O City! O miserable Race! Now the Fate of this Day hath plunged you into the worst of Miseries.

Clyt. Wo is me! I am struck. [Within.]

* *She is providing all Things necessary for the Funeral Supper.*] Gr. ἡ μὲν ἐς τάφον λίβητα κοσμεῖ. We must understand (saith one of the Scholiasts on this Place,) that the Word τάφον signifies two Things, either the Place where the Monuments of the Dead are placed, or a Supper which was made to comfort the Relations of the deceased for their Loss: So here, they had a Supper for *Orestes*, who was supposed dead; as another of the Scholiasts says, who further to explain ἐς τάφον, says, εἰς τὸ εὐδείπιον τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ Ὀρέστῃ δοκῆσι δόπλαιναί.

Elect.

Elect. 'Strike, if you can, double the Stroke.

Clyt. Wo is me! again.

Elect. I wou'd they would do the same to *Ægisthus*.

Cho. The Imprecations are perfected, they arise who are under the Earth; for the Dead return to shed the Murtherer's Blood.

[*'Strike, if you can, double the Stroke.'*] The Characters which *Sophocles* here gives *Orestes* and *Electra* are too cruel; and he who otherwise so well imitated *Homer*, yet here hath come very short of that great Original; who in speaking of the Action of *Orestes* commends the Murther of *Ægisthus*, but says nothing of that of *Clytæmnestra*; being sensible that how great soever her Crime was, yet it did not become her own Children to punish it in that Manner. The Moral indeed is very good, namely, to shew that the divine Vengeance will certainly punish Usurpation and Murther in the severest Manner; yet that doth not excuse the Atrocity of the Fact. See *Homer, Lib. III. Odyss.*

Τῷ οἱ ὀγδοάτῳ κακὸν ἤλυθε δῖος Ὀρέστης
 Ἄψ' ἀπ' Ἀθηνάων κτ' δ' ἔκτανε παρθρονῆα
 Ἀΐσιδον δολόμητιν, ὃ οἱ πατέρω κλυτὸν ἔκτα,
 Ἦτοι ὃ τ' κτείνας δαυυλάφον Ἀργείοισιν
 Μηρῆς τε συστέρης κ' ἀνάλκιδος Ἀιγιάδοιο.

In the eighth Year came godlike *Orestes* from Athens, and slew traiterous *Ægisthus* his Father's Murtherer; and after he had killed him, he prepared a Supper for the Funeral of his hated Mother, and her effeminate Consort *Ægisthus*, to which he invited the Argians. Therefore since *Homer* here commends *Orestes* for killing *Ægisthus*, but says nothing of killing his Mother, *Sophocles* ought to have observ'd the same Conduct.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE II.

Electra, Orestes, Pylades, Chorus.

Elect. But they come, and their bloody Hands drop with a Sacrifice of *Mars*. Well, my Brother, say how our Affairs stand within.

Orest. Well, if the Oracles of *Apollo* are true, the Wretch is dead; you need fear no more the Indignities you have suffered from that barbarous Mother.

Cho. Cease, I see *Ægisthus* approaching near us.

Elect. Retire immediately to the Entry, that since you have so well begun you may accomplish your Enterprize.

ANTISYSTEMA.

Orest. Be not uneasy, we will do as thou wouldst have us.

Elect. Make haste then.

Orest. I am gone.

Elect. I will take Care of what is to be done here.

[*Orestes, &c. retires in at the Gates of the Palace,*

Cho.

Cho. It were very convenient that we speak a few mild Words in this Man's Ear to deceive him, who while he suspects no Ill, falls into the Punishment which the Goddess of Vengeance prepares for him.

ACT V. SCENE III.

Ægisthus, Electra, Chorus.

Ægisth. Which of you knows where are the *Phocian* Strangers, who are come to inform us how *Orestes* was slain in a Chariot Course? You I ask, you who have been always so fierce; for you take too great a Part in this Accident not to be well instructed.

Elect. I am instructed, why not? Should the Knowledge escape me of the Calamity of him who was most dear to me?

Ægisth. Where are the Strangers, tell me?

Elect. Within with your Queen, who entertains them kindly.

Ægisth. And have they declared that he is certainly dead? [To Electra.]

Elect. They have not only assured us of it by their Words, but have given us such Proofs as leave us not the least room to doubt.

Ægisth. And can I go my self, and see those Proofs.

Elect. Yes, you may go and feed your Eyes with that horrid Spectacle.

Ægisth.

Ægisth. You have told me not according to your usual Custom, that which gives me much Pleasure.

Elect. Go then and enjoy that Pleasure, if you so delight in it.

Ægisth. I command all be silent, and that the Palace Gates be open'd for all the *Mycenians* and *Argians* to see, that if any of them there be who nourishes in his Heart any vain Hopes, he may quit them, seeing the Corps of *Orestes*, and receive our Reins, lest he feel the terrible Effects of my just Wrath, should he dare to lift up his Spirit against me.

Elect. My Lord, I will do my Duty, for Time hath at last instructed me to obey my Superiors.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Ægisthus, Orestes, Pylades, Electra.

[*Clytæmnestra cover'd with a Veil, which Ægisthus takes to be dead Orestes.*]

Ægist. O *Jove*! what Sight do I behold? *Orestes* dead before my Eyes, whose Death I wish'd for; but if *Nemesis* will punish me, I say no more. Take off that covering which hides him from my Eyes, that my Kinsman may have his Tribute of Tears from me.

Orest. Lift it up yourself, it is not my Business, but yours to see, and utter your Complaints for it.

Ægist. Your Admonition is just. I will obey, do thou call *Clytæmnestra* to me if she be in the Palace. [*To one of his Attendants.*

Orest. She is near you, look not elsewhere.

Ægist. Wo is me! what do I behold?

[*Uncovering the Body.*

Orest. Doth she Cause your Fear? Do you know her?

Ægist. In whose cursed Snares am I fallen?

Orest. Did you not perceive all this while, that alive you talk'd with the Dead?

Ægist. Wo is me! I understand what he hath said; doubtless this can be no other but *Orestes* who speaks to me.

Orest. Though * you are a great Prophet, yet you have been mistaken.

Ægist. I am undone, a Wretch, but permit me to speak a little.

Elect. Permit him to speak no longer, Brother, by the Gods, nor amuse us by his vain Discourses: For what is the Advantage of a Moment's Delay to a Man who is near his Death? But kill him as quick as possible, and when you have kill'd him, expose him to the Birds and Dogs, the only Sepulchre which it is fit he should have; that is the only Remedy of all my Evils.

* *You are a great Prophet yet.*] This is founded upon the Reputation which *Ægisthus* had of being a Prophet.

Orest.

Orest. We are not at Leisure to meddle with Controversies, but must only consult of Methods how to hasten thy Death.

Ægist. Why do you lead me into the Palace? If that Action be good, why needs it Darkness, have you not Courage to kill me here?

Orest. It is not for you to give your Orders, but go in where you kill'd my Father, that in the same Chamber his Murtherer may die also.

Ægist. Is it by all means necessary, that that Chamber must see the present and the future Miseries of the Sons of *Pelops*?

Orest. It must see thy Miseries, those are the Predictions which I make concerning thee, and which nothing can falsify.

Ægist. But you have not boasted your Father's Art.

Orest. You contradict much, and the Journey is retarded, but march.

Ægist. Thou lead.

Orest. You must go before.

Ægist. Is this because you fear I should escape you?

Orest. Not so, but I must take Care lest you feel any Comfort in your Death, but that it be grievous to you: " There ought imme-

" *There ought immediately to be such a Punishment inflicted.*] This Piece cannot end better than by these Words of *Orestes*, that this might appear an Act of Ju-

diately

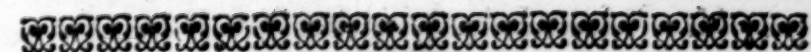
diately to be such a Punishment inflicted on all who will act contrary to the Laws, to die sooner ; then such flagitious Crimes would be less frequent.

Cho. O Race of *Atreus* ! who after you had suffered an infinite Number of Evils for the Sake of Liberty, hast with Difficulty at last obtain'd it by this present Effect of your Courage.

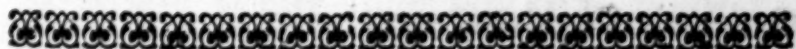
stice, and that the Audience might not look upon him as an Assassin or a Parricide, but an Executor of divine Vengeance, and an Instrument which God had made use of to punish so horrible a Crime.



THE



THE
TRAGEDY
OF
Oedipus Tyrannus.



M

Dramatis Personæ.

Oedipus, King of *Thebes*.

High Priest of *Jupiter*.

Creon, Brother to *Jocasta*.

Tiresias, a Prophet.

A *Messenger* from *Corinth*, an old *Shepherd*.

Another Shepherd, who had belonged to *Laius*.

Chorus, of old *Theban* Priests, and other ancient *Thebans*.

Jocasta, Widow of *Laius*, and Wife of *Oedipus*.

MUTE PERSONS.

A Multitude of Theban Youths.

Oedipus's Children.

SCENE before *Oedipus's Palace* at *Thebes*.



Oedipus Tyrannus.



The ARGUMENT.



HIS Tragedy of Oedipus had the Title of Tyrannus, a Tyrant or King, added to it in the latter Times, but for what Reason, whether because it excels all his other Pieces; or, because of the Description it gives us of the Miseries of that Prince, or only to distinguish it from the other Oedipus, called Coloneus, it is not certain. The Subject of it is as follows.

Laius, King of Thebes, having been warned by the Oracle that his own Son should murder him, marry his Mother, and succeed him in his Throne; to prevent these Mischiefs, delivered his Son, as soon as he was born, to one of his Ser-

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vants to be murdered; but the Servant moved with Compassion slew him not, but gave him to a Shepherd of Polybus, King of Corinth, and the Shepherd to the King. Polybus having no Child of his own, received him graciously, as did his Wife Merope, who brought him up as their own. Oedipus going to enquire of the Oracle concerning his Birth, in a Place where three Ways meet, chanced to meet and kill his Father. Whereupon there ensued a dreadful Pestilence, which wasted Thebes and all the neighbouring Countrey, which was not to cease until any one should resolve the Ænigma of Sphinx, which many tried to do in vain. At last Oedipus resolved it; the People of Thebes therefore, as a Reward of his Service, gave him his own Mother in Marriage, whom, not knowing to be so, he accepted: But the Truth being found out, he pulled out his own Eyes, and his Wife and Mother hanged her self. This Story, whether we consider the Heinousness of the Crimes that unhapyy Prince was guilty of, and at the same Time how he committed them all merely out of Ignorance, or those surprising Incidents by which they were discovered, and the fatal Consequences that Discovery produced to his whole House, is confessedly the noblest Subject that ever a Tragedy was composed upon. But yet Aristotle observes one Default in it, that it was not probable Oedipus should be so long married to Jocasta, and not know after what Manner Laius was slain, nor enquire after the Author of his Murther.

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Murder. But as that Subject could not subsist without it, Sophocles did not think fit to omit it, but placed it out of the Action of the Tragedy; and a Poet is only answerable for those Incidents which enter the Composition of his Fable, not those which go before, or follow after. Wherefore Aristotle lays it down as a Rule, Cap. XVI. of his Poeticks.

“ It is absolutely necessary, that among all
 “ the Incidents which compose the Fable,
 “ no one be without Reason; or if that be
 “ impossible, it ought to be so ordered, that
 “ that which is without Reason, be out of
 “ the Tragedy; as *Sophocles* has prudently ob-
 “ served in his *Oedipus*.



M 3


ACT



ACT I. SCENE I.

At the opening of the Scene there appears, in a Court before the Palace, an Altar rais'd to Oedipus, at which are prostrate a great Number of Theban Youths, the High Priest of Jupiter, with the other Priests of the several Temples at Sacrifice. At a Distance are discovered the two Temples of Pallas, the Altar of Ismenus, with Crowds of People round them.

Oedipus comes out of the Palace to them.

Oed.  Children ^a, young Offspring of ancient Cadmus, why are you prostrate at these Altars, adorned ^b with sacred Boughs?

The whole City is filled with Smoak of Sacrifices, likewise with Prayers address'd to A-

^a O Children, young Offspring of ancient Cadmus.] The Thebans are so called, because Cadmus the Son of Agenor being sent to seek his Sister Europa, in his Travels built Thebes; and afterwards Amphion, Son of Jupiter and Antiope, with the Sweetness of his Lyre caused the senseless Stones to raise themselves into the Walls which surrounded the City; but the Truth is, that he civilized them with good Laws and Customs, who before were rude and uncivilized. Hence they are called in the Antigone, Κάδμω πατρὶσι καὶ δόμῳ Ἀμφίωνος.

^b With sacred Boughs.] The Ancients when they pollo,

pollo, mixed with Lamentations. I sent no Person to demand the Cause of your Affliction, but am come my self for that Purpose, *Oedipus* a Prince so famous thro' all the World. But thou, old Man, speak first, since it is fit a Man of your Age should speak before these Youths. Why are you prostrate here? Is it on the Account of your present, or fear of future Sufferings? You shall find me always ready to assist you, for surely I were hard-hearted, if I did not lament the Occasion of this Concourse.

High-Priest. O thou who rulest our Land! You see the Age and the State of us who are

went into their Temples to pray, every one carried in his Hand Branches stuck in Wool, and sometimes they were crowned with them; the Boughs were Olive when they prayed or sacrificed to *Minerva*, when to *Apollo* Laurel; wherefore *Homer* says of *Chryses Apollo's* Priest,

Στίμματα' ἔχον ἐν χερσὶν ἐκτετόλκ' Ἀπόλλωνος.

Of the same Use was the *κνήμα* mentioned in the *Ajax*, which consisted of Locks of Hair. The *Jews* had a Festival in which they carried Branches, as they did likewise on all Occasions of publick Rejoicing; as you may read 1 *Maccab.* xiii. 51. *And entered into it the three and twentieth Day of the second Month, in the hundred seventy and one Year with Thanksgiving, and Branches of Palm Trees, and with Harps, and Cymbals, and with Viols, and Hymns and Songs, &c.* From them it passed to the *Greeks*, who celebrated the same Festival and called it, *ἐκφορεία*, *Oscophoria*, ἀπὸ τῆ φέρειν τὰς ἔχας, i. e. from carrying Boughs hung with Grapes, which were termed *ἔχαι*. The Institution and Manner of it are described at large by *Plutarch* in the Life of *Theseus*.

prostrate at ^c your Altars: Some of whom are too young to go far hence, and some too old. These are the principal Priests of all our Temples; I am a Priest of *Jove*; these a Company of Youths; another Tribe sit crowned at the ^d two Temples of *Pallas*, others at the prophetick Altar ^e of *Ismenus*. The City, as thou seest thy self, as a Tempest-beaten Ship, is almost sunk, not able to withstand the Fury of the raging Waves. The Earth is made barren of all her Fruits, her Flocks all perish,

^c *At your Altars.*] Gr. βωμοῖσι, which the old Scholiast calls ναοῖσι, which contain the Altar, for thus he describes the Temples, Ναὸς and ἱερόν, or the whole Edifice, in which are contained βωμὸς, the Altar, on which they offered their Oblations. 2. Πρόναος, the Porch before the Temple. 3. Τέμενον, where the Image stood of the chief God. But with Submission here was no Temple, for the Altar was raised in the Middle of the Court, that the Action might be publick and visible.

^d *Two Temples of, &c.*] *Pallas* had two Temples in *Thebes*, one consecrated to *Minerva*, Ὀψα, a Phœnician Word, which signifies, Grand, or, ἀλαλχορμηής, i. e. The Assister; the other to *Minerva* Ἰσμήνια, and took its Name from *Ismenus*, a River which ran through *Thebes*. But some say the former was not in *Thebes*, but in a neighbouring Village. *Æschylus* in his seven Captains against *Thebes* invokes her by the former Name, ἐν μάχαισι τε μάκαι, ῥανιστ' Ὀψα.

^e *Altar of Ismenus.*] Gr. Ἰτμινῶ τε μαρτεῖα ποδῶν, the prophetick Ashes of *Ismenus*; near the River *Ismenus* there was a Temple sacred to *Apollo*, where the Priests burnt Sacrifices, and consulted the Flames, and thence delivered Prophecies,

and

and Mothers dye with their Infants. The most cruel Pestilence with a devouring Fire ravages the City, and deprives it of its Inhabitants; and black *Pluto* grows rich by our Mournings and Lamentations. Wherefore neither I, nor these young Men present, are prostrate at your Altars, as if we judged you equal with the Gods; but we address our selves to you as to the first of Men, and as to one who is alone able to ease us of those Calamities which oppress us, and to reconcile us to the Favour of the Gods. It is you, who coming to this City freed us from the Tribute which we paid to the cruel Goddess, and on that sad Occasion you received no Succours but from the Gods who inspired you; wherefore with Justice we look upon you as our only Deliverer. And now, O most powerful *Oedipus*, we all turn our Eyes toward you, and do beseech you, find out some Remedy against our Evils, either by consulting the Gods, or joining in Consultation with Men; for I see that wise Men often find certain Succours in the greatest Evils. Go now, thou best of Men, raise up your ruin'd City, pity our sad State, as now this Land calls you its Saviour, by Reason of our former Deliverance which we owe to you; for we shall by no Means remember your former Benefits, if after you have saved our Lives, you suffer us to perish miserably: But now preserve the City, as before you made Fortune smile on your dejected People; now be like
thy

thy self, remember that the ^f Number of Subjects makes the Grandeur of Princes, and that without Men, Fortresses and Ships are entirely useless.

Oed. Miserable Children, I am not ignorant of the important Cause which brings you here, nor of what you wish for; for well I know those Evils which afflict you. But your Sufferings are nothing in Comparison of mine, every one of you feels but his own Evil, but my Soul is every way oppress'd, with its own Grief, with yours and all my Peoples: Think not your Cries have awaked me from my Sleep, but you know how many Tears I've shed, and that my Spirit hath long contended with a thousand different Thoughts: In this sad Agitation I have used that Remedy which I thought most proper to hasten your Deliverance; I have sent *Creon*, the Son of *Menæceus*, my Wife's Brother, to the Temple of *Apollo*, to inquire of that God the Way to save this City. And when I consider the long Time he hath been absent, I am surprized that he is not yet returned, nor can I comprehend the Reason of his too long Delay. But when he comes, then I should be the worst of Men if I did not execute all that the God commands.

^f *The Number of Subjects, &c.*] *Alcæus* calls Men *πύργοι ἀγῆστοι*, martial Towers. And *Demosthenes* says, "Ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλεις, καὶ οὐ τείχη," the Men are the City, not the Walls.

High-

High-Priest. My Lord, you speak of *Creon* in a proper Time, for these Children inform me that he is near.

Oed. I wish he comes with ^s as good Luck, as he appears, pleasant in his Countenance.

High-Priest. He doth so, otherwise he would not come with his Head crowned with Laurel.

Oed. We shall soon know, for he is near enough for us to inquire the Truth of him.

ACT I. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Creon, High-Priest, other Priests and Thebans.

Oed. O Prince, my beloved Kinsman, what Answer do you bring us from the God?

Cre. A good Answer, for I say that our Misfortunes will end if the Issue prove right.

Oed. What Speech is that? It gives me neither ground to fear or hope.

Cre. If you will hear the Will of God, in the Presence of these, I am ready to speak it; otherwise I will follow you into the Palace.

Oed. Speak before them all, for I am not

^s *As good Luck.*] Gr. ἐν τύχῃ γέ τω. The Particles τω and τῷ with the *Æolicks* and *Atticks*, are common to both Masculine and Feminine Genders; as κλέω τῷ τάλπιγος, *I hear a Trumpet*, τῷ χρείαι, *for what Cause or Necessity*. VET. SCHOL.

so much in Pain for my self, as for my afflicted People.

Cre. I will speak what I heard of the God. *Phæbus* plainly commanded us to drive Pollution out of this Land, as being nourished in it, and not suffer in it one Moment the Monster which is the Object of his Wrath.

Oed. How doth he direct us to purge the Land?

Cre. We must either drive to Banishment the Murtherer of *Laius*, or make him expiate with his own Blood, the Blood which he hath shed. Since *Laius's* Blood unrevenge'd afflicts the Land.

Oed. Who is this whom the Oracle hath thus declared to us hath shed Blood?

Cre. *Laius*, my Lord, was Governor of this Land before you rul'd it.

Oed. I know it, but I never saw him.

Cre. It is his Death the Oracle commands us to revenge, by punishing his Murtherers.

Oed. But in what Part of the Earth are they, and where will that unsearchable Footstep be found out, to trace the Author of a Crime committed so long ago?

Cre. He said here in *Thebes*; for that which we seek may be found, but that which is neglected, easily escapes.

Oed. Whether did *Laius* happen to meet this Death, at home, or in the Field, or in another Land?

Cre.

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Cre. As he travelled out to consult the Oracle, and never returned home since that Moment.

Oed. Did no Messenger, or Guide who went with him in the Way return, of whom we may enquire and know the Truth?

Cre. They are all dead, one excepted, who fled away for Fear, who could tell but one Thing of all that passed.

Oed. What was that? For the smallest Light that one can discern often sufficeth to make an entire Discovery.

Cre. He said a Company of Thieves kill'd him, and that he fell oppressed by Numbers.

Oed. What Thief durst venture to commit so great a Crime, had he not been encourag'd by the Promise of some great Reward?

Cre. It was supposed they lay in Ambush for him, when this Prince died, we found no Succour in our Evils.

Oed. What so great Evil then hindred you from making Search for the Murtherers of your King?

Cre. *Sphinx* forced us to think only of our present Evil, and neglect those whose Author was more uncertain.

Oed. But I will lay all open from the Beginning, it is with Justice that *Apollo* ordered us by your Mouth to revenge this Murther; wherefore

wherefore^h you shall find me your Assistant. I will expiate this Land, and justify the Oracle of the God: And herein it is not for any of my Relations, but for my self I labour; I defend my self from the Violence of an Assassin: For whosoever it was that kill'd *Laius*, would imbrue likewise his Hands in my Blood: So that while I labour for his Vengeance, at the same Time I provide for my own Security. Wherefore quickly, Children, rise from these Seats, taking in your Hands those sacred Boughs, let another gather the People of *Thebes* together here; while I try all Methods. This Discovery which the God hath made us, will either end our Lives, or our Evils.

High-Priest. O Children, let us rise, since we only come to demand what the King hath executed, and may *Phæbus*, who gave those

^h *You shall find me your Assistant, &c.]* Observe how nicely *Sophocles* manages the Character of *Oedipus*, so as to make him appear what a Tragedian ought to chuse as a proper Subject of his Tragedy, that is, neither bad nor good in the superlative Degree. For as he is here represented as a good Prince, and one who omitted nothing that could any Way conduce to the Good of his People, yet hath he in several Instances shew'd himself to be imprudent, violent, and proud. Yet were not those Crimes properly the Cause of his Misfortunes, but his Rashness, and Curiosity; for *Creon* tells him hereafter: *Such Tempers as yours are insupportable to themselves.* And these are the Vices which *Sophocles* would have us correct.

Oracles,

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Oracles, be our Saviour and Healer of all our Evils.

[ⁱ Exeunt all but the Priests who compose the Chorus.

[ⁱ Exeunt all but the Priests who compose the Chorus.] The old Scholiast hath mistaken the Persons of whom the Chorus of this Tragedy consists, for he tells us that ἔξαισι ὁ ἱεὺς πρῶτος δὲ ὅπῃς ἔλθιν· ἅμα δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ χάρακος ἰτίσθαι ὑποκείμεν, and a little after καὶ τὴν πρῶτον τῷ βασιλεῖ παρῆσι πρεσβύτην, ἔξ ὧν ὁ χορὸς (συμπληρῶν). The High-Priest goes out, having done that which he came to do, and likewise to make room for another Actor ——— according to the King's Command come in certain ancient Men, of whom the Chorus is compos'd. But he seems to be sufficiently confuted by the learned Mr. Dacier, for how is it possible that ancient Men who arriv'd on the Theatre but the Moment that the High-Priest and Youths who accompanied him departed, should know the Oracle which *Creon* brought from *Apollo*, and so make Reflections so suitable to it as they do in the following Song? It is most reasonable therefore, that the Chorus should consist of such Persons as had taken Possession of the Theatre from the Beginning of the Action. The Words of *Sophocles* are sufficient to confute this Error, for he tells us the Age and the State of those who are assembled at the Altar, viz. himself at the Head of a select Number of *Theban* Youths, and the other Priests of the several Temples; he retires after he had perform'd what belong'd to his Office, and the Youths along with him, it being neither suitable to the Dignity of the High-Priest, nor the Capacity of the Youths to be of the Chorus. It remains therefore that the other Priests who were present from the beginning of the Action, had heard the Oracle, and what else pass'd between *Oedipus* and *Creon*, in order to a Discovery of the Murtherers, must compose the Chorus, until they are join'd by others of the principal Citizens.

ACT

ACT I. SCENE III.

Chorus.

Cho. O divine Oracle which came from the rich *Pythian* Temple to famous *Thebes*, my Spirits are seized with Astonishment and Fear. O *Delian* King, Healer, I worship thy Divinity. Tell me, divine Oracle, what Effects of thy Beneficence shall we receive now, or in Process of Time? Daughter of golden Hope. You, O immortal *Minerva*, Daughter of *Jove*, first I invoke; and *Diana*, Governess of the Earth, which hath a famous Throne in this City, and thou *Apollo*, the Darter, I invoke likewise; you three Repellers of Evil be favourable, since you expelled the Evil which as a raging Fire consum'd our City, come still to my Assistance, O ye Gods, I bear numberless Evils. All the People are feeble and languishing, and our oppressed Spirits cannot furnish us with the least Succour; nor can the Fruits of the Earth arrive to their Maturity, neither are the Women able to bear the Throws of Child-birth. You may see one fall dead upon another, who swifter than a well-wing'd Fowl or Lightning, rowl themselves toward the Shore of the infernal God, so that the City is daily more and more deserted. An infinite Number of miserable Abortives lie dead unlamented on the Ground; Mothers

thers and Grand-Mothers oppressed with Evils assembled from all Parts, prostrate themselves at these Altars, which they regard as a secure Port, and demand of the Gods an end of these Evils. The Prayers which they address to *Apollo* are mix'd with Cries and Lamentations. Wherefore, O thou beauteous Daughter of *Jove*, espouse our Cause, and expell this wicked *Mars* out of this Countrey, either into the vast Bed of *Amphitrite*, or into the *Euxine* Sea, which dashes against the *Thracian* Rocks. What the Night leaves unperformed the Day accomplishes. O *Jupiter*, who rulest the Powers of the purple Lightnings, consume him with your Lightning. O! *Lycian* King, send your invincible Arrows from your Golden Bow for our Assistance: And thou *Diana*, enlighten us with thy purple Rays wherewith thou passest over the *Lycian* Mountains. Thee I invoke also, adorn'd with a golden Mitre, drinking *Bacchus*, Companion of the *Mænades*, to come to our Help, burning with your bright Torch this most inglorious of all the Gods.

N

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

Oedipus, Chorus, Attendants.

Oed.



YOU ^k ask, but if you would obtain your Request, you must listen unto my Words, and assist your selves by obeying my Decree, and you may obtain a Remedy against your Evils. Mine, who heretofore never thought of speaking of this Murther, nor could I be suspected of having any Share in it.

* *You ask, but if you would obtain your Request.] Oedipus* being resolved to use all Means in his Power to discover the Murtherer of *Laius*, first encourageth all his Subjects to assist him, by telling them, that as he was the Cause of the Pestilence, if he were discovered and expell'd, that would cease. Wherefore he lays his strict Commands, that whoever knew where he was, should instantly discover him, and promises the Discoverer both a Reward and Thanks for his Service. And to encourage the Murtherer to discover himself, he says he shall suffer nothing but Banishment out of the City, a small Punishment for so great a Crime, and only equal with that which the *Romans* called *minor Capitis diminutio*, which is as *Paul. Jurisc.* expresseth it, *cum amittimus civitatem, & libertatem retinemus*. But if nothing will prevail upon them to discover him, he lays the utmost Curse upon him, *viz.* that he should be driven from all Things common.

I would not have enterprized to search the Author of this Crime, unless I had some certain Signs how to discover him: But now, since I am of the Number of the Citizens, I decree to all you *Thebans*, that whosoever of you knows him who slew *Laius*, the Son of *Labdacus*, that he discover him to me. But if he who committed the Crime fears to come and accuse himself, I shall free him from that Fear, he shall suffer no other Punishment but Exile. But if any one knew any other his Murtherer, of any other Land, let him not be silent, for I will give him Thanks, and a Reward proportionable to so great a Service. But if you will still be silent, and any one out of Fear for his Friend or himself holds his Peace, then hear what I shall do. I forbid that Man, whosoever he is, to be received into this Land, whose Government I possess, to speak to any Body, or to be made a Communicant of the Prayers and Sacrifices of the Gods, or to ^m partake of the Holy Water: But I command that all should chase him from their Houses, and pursue him as the Miscreant who pollutes this Land, as the Py-

[*Partake of the Holy Water.*] The Ancients had a Custom, that before they went to Sacrifice, all those who partook thereof, should wash their Hands, and the Water in which they washed was called *χεῖρψ*, and with this Water likewise they were afterwards sprinkled by the Priests; on both which Accounts the Poets use *χεῖρψ* instead of *ἱερὸ πῖζεν*, to offer Sacrifice.

thian Oracle of the God has manifestly declared to me. And so I will accomplish the Will of the God, and revenge the Dead, and I curse him that did it, whether he being one conceals himself, or if he had his Accomplices, to drag a miserable Life. And I beseech the Gods, that I may suffer the sad Effects of those Imprecations, if the Murtherer be in my Palace and I am conscious to it. And I beseech you all to execute all those Decrees, both for your Love of me, and the Respect which you owe to the God, and for the Compassion which you are obliged to have for your Countrey, which is so barren, and so miserably destroyed. For if the Gods did not positively demand Vengeance, yet were it not convenient for you to see this Murtherer pass unpunish'd, and not to pursue the Murtherer of so great a Man, and your King. At present I possess the Throne of which he was seiz'd; the Queen his Spouse hath rais'd me to her Bed, and chosen me for her Husband, and his Children likewise would have been mine if he had had any. But since the Powers deny'd him those Blessings, now that Misfortune hath oppress'd him, I will supply their Place and labour for him as for my own Father. I will try every Method to find out the Author of the Murther of this Descendant of ancient *Agenor*. And to those which do not obey my Orders, I pray to the Gods that the Land may refuse
her

her Fruits, and that their Wives may die without Children, and that themselves may die such a Death or a worse than threatens them. But to us, who with all our Hearts consent to what I have said, may Justice be an Assistant, and may the eternal Gods favour us with their Protection.

Cho. My Lord, as you have bound me by a Curse to discover the Murtherer, I declare I neither kill'd him, nor do I know who kill'd him: But to resolve that Question belongs to him that sent the Oracle.

Oed. You have spoke right, but ^m no Man can force the Gods to speak what they will not.

Cho. I have still a second Advice to give you.

Oed. And if you have after that a third, do not omit to speak it.

Cho. ⁿ King *Tiresias* hath the same Know-

^m *No Man can force the Gods.*] *Oedipus* makes this Answer to the *Chorus*, to prevent the Fiction of their sending again to the Oracle, lest it should cause too long a Delay in the *Drama*, which to the Audience would taste but insipid: Nor was it necessary, for it is plain that the same Oracle which declared the Cause of the Pestilence, did likewise point out the Murtherer, tho' *Creon*, for Fear of the King's Displeasure, would not discover it.

ⁿ *King Tiresias.*] The *Chorus* calls him King, because of his prophetick Spirit, not for any civil Power which he possessed. It may not be improper to insert here a Passage out of *Dr. Potter's Archaeol. Græc.* which

ledge with *Apollo* in this Affair; and by consulting him you may discover what you search for.

Oed. Nor was I negligent in that Affair; but by the Advice of *Creon*, I sent two Messengers for him, and it is a Wonder why he is absent so long.

fully justifies the *Chorus* in giving *Tiresias* this Title.
 “ It has been the Custom of all Nations to pay a peculiar Honour to their Priests; which was partly
 “ done out of Respect to the Gods, whom they represented; and partly because they did not pray for
 “ a Blessing on themselves, their own Families and Friends only, but on whole Communities, on the
 “ whole State of Mankind. They were accounted
 “ Mediators between Gods and Men, being obliged
 “ to offer the Sacrifices and Prayers of the People to their Gods ——— and on the other Side *ἱερῶν*
 “ *ἀνθρώποις*, deputed by the Gods to be their
 “ Interpreters to Men, to instruct them how to pray
 “ for themselves, what it was most expedient to ask, what Sacrifices, what Vows, what Gifts would be
 “ most acceptable to the Gods; and in short to teach
 “ them all the Ceremonies used in divine Worship.
 “ ——— On this Account the Priests were honoured
 “ with the next Place to their Kings, and chief Magistrates; and in many Places wore the same Habits. These were often consecrated to the Priesthood. Thus *Anius* in *Virgil* was King of *Dolos*, and
 “ Priest of *Apollo*.

“ *Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.*

The same Author proves by a Passage in *Plutarch*, that *ἐν ἱερῶσι καὶ τὸ βασιλείας*, the Dignity of Priests was equal to that of Kings.

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Cho. There are other Reports concerning his Death, but they are frivolous and vain.

Oed. What are they? For I weigh every Thing I hear.

Cho. He is said to have been slain by some Travellers.

Oed. And I too heard that, but can find none who can say he saw the Murther committed.

Cho. But tho' he be a little fearful of the Discovery, he will not attend the Effect of your Imprecations.

Oed. Who does not fear to act the Crime, will not fear the Imprecations.

Cho. But he who discovers him is come, for they bring hither a divine Prophet, who alone of all Men speaks nothing but the Truth.

ACT II. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Tiresias, Chorus, &c.

Oed. Wise *Tiresias*, who knowest all Things which can be known, who knowest the Secrets of the Heavens, and of the Earth's dark Womb; tho' you are deprived of the Day's Light, yet you cannot fail of knowing the Evils in which this City is plunged, of which, O King, we regard thee the only Saviour and Helper: If our Messengers have not already informed thee, *Phæbus* has sent Word to us,

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that our Freedom from this Disease would only be obtained by searching diligently the Murtherers of *Laius*, and either putting them to Death, or expelling them out of the Kingdom. But thou conceal not from us the Truth, but consult the Voice of Birds, make use of all Ways of Divination, deliver thy self and the City, deliver me, instruct us how to appease the Blood which cries against us; we rely on thee, and remember that to succour the Miserable is the noblest of Labours.

Tir. ° Alas! alas! How often doth Knowledge make us unhappy? For what I know now, undoes me: I should not have come hither.

Oed. What is the Reason that you come hither in such Amazement?

Tir. Dismiss me hence; your Evils and mine likewise will be more supportable if you will follow my Counsel.

Oed. What you say is unjust, and in refusing to answer us, you refuse to succour this City which brought you up.

° *Alas! alas! How often, &c.*] *Triclinius* says, that *Tiresias* begins with this sad Exclamation, as fearing some Mischief from *Oedipus* if he should discover him to be the Cause of the Pestilence, but this doth not agree with what he says afterwards.

ὃ γὰρ με μοῖρα πρὸς γέ σου πεισῖν
It is not my Fate to die by thee, and
ἄπειμ' ἢ τὸ σὸν δέσας πρόσωπον.
I go hence, not fearing your Face.

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Tir. I see that your Demand will plunge you into the worst of Evils, therefore force me not to speak.

Cho. Nay by the Gods do not return so; since we all as Suppliants adore you.

Tir. Yes, but you do not all understand what you do, but I by no means will discover the Evils which environ you, as I shall do if I speak what I know.

Oed. What say you? Tho' you know the Truth, will you conceal it? Can you betray us, and suffer your Countrey entirely to be destroyed?

Tir. It is for your Sake no less than my own that I am silent. Why do you rashly accuse me? If I should speak, you would not listen to me.

Oed. Thou worst of Fellows, thou wouldst enrage the hardest Rocks; wilt thou tell us nothing? Art thou so inexorable and morose in thy Anger?

Tir. You have upbraided me with my Anger, but consider not your own, therefore you insult me.

Oed. Who would not be angry to hear these Words, and to see how dishonourably you treat your Countrey?

Tir. The Evils which I see will come to pass of themselves, tho' I conceal them.

Oed. Therefore you ought to tell me what will come to pass.

Tir.

Tir. I will not speak any farther, be you transported with never so fierce Anger.

Oed. Therefore thus enraged as I am, I can neither regard Measures, nor dissemble any Thing. It appears to me that you were an Accomplice in this Crime, tho' your Hands be free from the very Fact; but if you had your Eyes, I should accuse you as the only Author of it.

Tir. True, but I declare that you are obnoxious to those Imprecations which you have pronounced; and that from this present Day you are neither permitted to speak to me nor your Subjects, but that we ought all to look upon you as the Monster which draws down upon this Land the Wrath of Heaven.

Oed. With what Impudence dar'st thou invent this Falshood? Do you think to escape my Resentment?

Tir. I do, for Truth is stronger than Injustice.

Oed. Who discovered this Truth? Not your Art.

Tir. You did, for you forced me unwillingly to speak.

Oed. What? Speak again that I may understand you better.

Tir. Do you not understand yet? Or do you tempt me to speak?

Oed. It is not to tempt you. But speak again.

Tir.

Tir. I say that you are the Murtherer of this Man whose Murtherer you seek.

Oed. Do you glory in the Affront you put upon me, and again repeat it?

Tir. And what if I should speak all that I know? How much more then would you be enraged?

Oed. Say as much as you please, it will be all said in vain.

Tir. I say that you, unknown to your self, do converse criminally with your nearest Relation, and see not into what an Abyss of Misery you are plunged.

Oed. And dost thou think that I will always bear this, and suffer thee to triumph?

Tir. Yes, for Truth hath ever the greatest Power.

Oed. It hath, but Truth is not in thee, since thou art no less blind in the Eyes of thy Mind, than in the Eyes of thy Body.

Tir. But thou art a Wretch to upbraid me with these Things, with which there is none of these present who will not upbraid thee soon.

Oed. Thy Life is only preserved by thy Darknes in which thou art plunged, and but for that, this is the last Time that ever any should behold thee.

Tir. It is not my Fate to fall by you, for *Apollo* is my Safeguard.

Oed. Are these *Creon's* Inventions, or yours?

Tir.

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Tir. *Creon* has done you no Injury, but you alone have injured your self.

Oed. O Wealth and Power, and Art excelling all Arts, how dost thou expose us to Envy? Since for the Sake of this Crown, which the People with one Consent have placed upon my Head, *Creon*, my once faithful Friend hath laid a Snare for me, and stirred up against me that old Enchanter, that Impostor who is clear-sighted only in his Interest, but is blind in his Art. Wherefore say, How is it possible that you should be a true Prophet? When that horrid Monster *Sphinx* destroyed the Land, why did you not find out some Way to deliver it? And to explain that *Ænigma* was not for any ordinary Person, but there needed a prophetick Spirit which you have not, and which the Gods never gave thee; but I *P Oedipus*, an ignorant Person came, and explained the *Ænigma* with my Ingenuity; nor did I find it out by consulting Birds. I did it, whom you attempt to banish, thinking to be *Creon's* principal Favourite; but this Plot may fall upon your own Head, and his who was the Author

P I Oedipus an ignorant Person.] This *Oedipus* says of himself through Modesty, whereas indeed his Wit which he discovered in solving the *Ænigma* of *Sphinx*, grew into a Proverb, as we find by the Words of *Davus* in *Terence*.

Davus sum, non Oedipus.

of

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of it: And had I not some Reverence for your Age, I would make thee by sad Experience know the Effects of your wicked Designs.

Cho. Both the Words of *Tiresias*, and those of *Oedipus*, seem to us who have considered them with cooler Reason, to be only spoke in Anger. This is no proper Time to speak our private Resentments, but to consider how we may best solve the Oracle of the God.

Tir. Though you are King, it is but just that I answer you with the same Freedom which you use in speaking to me. I am not your Subject, but *Apollo's*, neither will I employ *Creon* to protect me; but (I say) since you have reproached me as blind, you your self see, but see not in what Evils you are plunged, neither where you live, nor with whom you dwell. But do you know of whom you are born? And do you not know that you are an Enemy to your nearest Relations, both those who are dead, and those on the Earth? The bitter Curses on both Sides, which you derive from your Father and your Mother, drive you out of the Earth, who though you see now, hereafter you will be plunged in Darkness; and in what Place will not you make your Cries be heard? What Mountain will not echo your Complaints? When you perceive what an unhappy Marriage you have failed into, after a prosperous Voyage. You know not yet of all your Evils, which will put you in the Number of your Children; and now reproach

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proach *Creon* and me as much as you please for this Freedom; but no more criminal Wretch than thy self will ever meet his deserved Fate.

Oed. Must I then hear this Speech from him? Be gone to Perdition quickly; be gone from our Palace, away.

Tir. I would not have come if you had not called me.

Oed. I did not know you would talk such foolish Things, otherwise I would not have called you hither in such Haste.

Tir. You accuse me of Folly, but your Father thought me wise. [Going.]

Oed. Who? Stay. Who was my Father?

Tir. This same Day will give you both your Birth, and your Death.

Oed. How mysterious and dark are all your Words?

Tir. Therefore you are the properest to explain them.

Oed. You reproach me with a Thing which made all my Grandeur.

Tir. It is that Grandeur which has ruined you.

Oed. But if I have preserved the City, my own Safety is of small Importance to me.

Tir. I go hence, and thou, Boy, lead me.

Oed. Let him lead you away, your Presence is here but importunate, and you only trouble us; when you are gone, we shall be easy.

Tir.

Tir. I go away, since I have said those Things on the Account of which I came hither; nor do I fear your Face, for it is not in your Power to kill me. I tell thee then, that this Man whom a while ago thou didst pursue with Threats and Decrees as the Murtherers of *Laius*, is here. He passes for a Stranger, but he will soon appear to be a home born *Theban*: Nor will his Fortune give him much Delight; for blind and poor, he will be a Wanderer in a strange Land. [*Shewing his Scepter, the Ensign of his royal Dignity.*] He will appear to be a Brother and Father to his Children, a Son and Husband of her of whom he was born, his Father's Son, and Murtherer. Now retire into your Palace, and there think on what I have said; and if that you shall find me to have spoken false, then you may say that I am no Prophet.

ACT II. SCENE III.

Chorus, STROPHE I.

¶ Who is he whom the prophesying *Delphick* Rock accused to have committed Mur-

¶ *Who is he whom the prophesying, &c.*] The *Chorus* being willing to favour *Oedipus*, nor yet presuming to accuse *Tiresias* of Falshood, speaks in a doubtful Manner, wondering of whom *Apollo* should speak; and because *Parnassus* a very steep rocky Mountain was near *Delphi*, and thereon *Apollo's* Oracle, therefore he calls it the *Delphick* Rock.

ther,

ther, the worst of Crimes, with his bloody Hands? Whosoever he is, it is Time for him with the swiftest Racer's Speed to take his Flight; for the Son of *Jupiter*, armed with Fire and Lightning, is prepared to assail him. And the cruel inevitable Fates pursue him.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For the Oracle of snowy *Parnassus*, declared that every one should search this Man who hides himself. The Wretch traverses the Forests, searches out the Dens and Crevices of the Rocks, he wanders alone in the Fields as a Bull, to evade the Effect of the Oracles

It was supposed to be in the very Middle of the Earth, for which Reason the Oracles are a little after called, τὰ μεσόμφαλα γὰρ μαιῖνα. And the City of *Delphi*, near which this Oracle stands, is called *Orbis umbilicus*. Hear *Alex ab Alex.* on this Subject, *Lib. VI. Cap. 2.* *Delphi orbis umbilicus commune omnium oraculum in alto Parnasso, urbs non mœnibus, sed abruptis rupibus munita, arduo ac difficili ascensu. Templum Apollinis cultu & religione longe celebratissimum intra urbem non manu extructa, sed nativa præcipitia munivere.* The Reason of *Delphi* being called the Navel of the Earth, is founded upon a Fable, that *Jupiter* once having let fly two Eagles, one from the East, and another from the West, they met each other just at *Delphi*; in Memory whereof they consecrated in the Temple two Eagles, and a Navel upon which they stood, made of white Stone, with a Ribband hanging from it instead of a Navel String. *Strabo* assures us that this is in the very Middle of *Greece*, which, perhaps might occasion the Fable.

delivered

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delivered from the Middle of the Earth, but they are immortal and inevitable.

STROPHE II.

The wise Prophet comes to disturb us with dismal Explications, neither to be denied, nor yet rejected. What shall I say? I am perplexed with Doubts, from Hope to Fear alternately I am toss'd: Nor do I see what can determine me, for I never heard that there was ever any Difference between the Son of *Labdacus*, and the Son of *Polybus*. Therefore why should I by violent Conjectures make the Sense of the Oracle fall upon *Oedipus*, and revenge upon him a Murther, of which we know not the Author?

ANTISTROPHE II.

Yet *Jupiter* and *Apollo* are wise, and know all the Actions of Men: But that a Prophet has more Knowledge from the Gods than another, it is not certainly determined; one Man may excel another in Prudence, yet they may all be deceived; but before I see a certain Oracle, I will not accuse *Oedipus*. This is certain, that a horrid Monster ravaged this Land, and we then were Witnesses of his Wisdom, for which the City was well disposed towards him, and therefore they shall never charge this Crime on him by my Consent.


O

ACT



ACT III. SCENE I.

Chreon, Corus, Attendants.

Cre.  *Hebans,* I came to you, for I could not support the terrible News which I heard, that King *Oedipus* accuses me of the blackest of Treasons. If in a Time so calamitous as this, he thinks I have conspired against him, or went about to defame him, I desire not a longer Life; for an Accusation of so bad a Nature will bring the greatest of Scandals upon me, for it will make me pass for a wicked Man among the Citizens, among you, and all my Friends.

Cho. It was only his violent Anger that suggested to him that Suspicion, it was not the real Persuasion of his Mind.

Cre. Whose Assertion was it that the Prophet, persuaded by my Counsel, spreads false Reports of him?

Cho. It was said, but I know not upon what Design.

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Cre. ' Did my Accuser speak with a bold Presence, and sound Mind?

Cho. I do not know, for the Actions of Princes are above my Reach. But see, himself comes out of the Palace.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Oedipus, Chorus, Creon.

Oed. Here you; how came you hither? Or have you the Impudence to come into my Palace, who art certainly the Murtherer of *Laius*; who hast certainly conspired against me to rob me of my Crown? Speak by the Gods, did you observe any Cowardize or Folly in me, that you dare to enterprize so hardy an Attempt? Or did you think that I should not at last discover your Conspiracy, and that I would not prevent it? But is it not the greatest Folly to aspire to the Throne without the Favour of the People and Friends, which is always obtained by their Favour and Abundance of Wealth?

Cre. But how did I do it? ' Let me speak

' *Did my Accuser speak with a bold Presence, &c.] i. e.* Was he in his Senses; as a Person in his Senses hath a sound Mind and stedfast Eye, so one besides himself hath a Distracted Mind, and wandring Eye.

' *Let me speak in my Turn.]* The Character which *Sophocles* gives *Creon*, is directly opposite to that of *Oedipus*; for as the latter is represented precipitate and

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in my Turn? When you have heard, then judge me your self.

Oed. You are very eloquent, but I do not think fit to hear you: It is enough I have found you my grievous Enemy.

Cre. But pray hear first what Defence I shall make.

Oed. Do not tell me that you are not a perfidious Man.

Cre. If you think that blind Obstinacy is of any Advantage to you, you are mistaken.

Oed. If you think to conspire against your Kinsman, and not suffer a Punishment equal to your Crime, you are mistaken.

Cre. I agree with you, but inform me what Injury you have suffered from me.

Oed. Did you not persuade me to send to that venerable Prophet?

Cre. I did, and still give you the same Counsel.

Oed. How long Time, since, *Laius* —

Cre. Was what? For I do not understand you?

Oed. Was assassinated and slain.

Cre. A great many Years ago, which cannot easily be reckoned.

violent in his Accusation, so the other is wise and moderate, while by Arguments drawn *ex improbabili*, and at last by a solemn Oath, he endeavours to acquit himself of the Suspicion of having acted falsely for his own Interest.

Oed.

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Oed. Was then this Prophet conversant in this Art?

Cre. His Wisdom then, was as his Honour, great.

Oed. Did he never make Mention of me in those Times?

Cre. Never in my Presence.

Oed. But was no Search made for the Murtherer?

Cre. There was, but we never heard of him.

Oed. Why therefore then did not this wise Prophet say what he doth to Day?

Cre. I do not know; as to Things which I understand not, I love to hold my Peace.

Oed. But you know what concerns your self, and would do well to speak it.

Cre. Speak what? I will never deny what I know?

Oed. Unless the Prophet had conspired with you, he had never accused me with the Murther of *Laius*.

Cre. Whether he accused you or not, your self knows it, for I want to learn of you the same Things which you would learn of me.

Oed. Demand whatsoever you will of me, I shall never be proved the Murtherer.

Cre. Have you not married my Sister?

Oed. I cannot deny what you say.

Cre. And is it not as true that you divide with her the supreme Power?

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Oed. She hath an absolute Power over me, and I grant her whatsoever her Wish can form.

Cre. And is it not true, that after you both I possess the highest Honours?

Oed. It is that which makes thy Treachery still more conspicuous.

Cre. You would change your Sentiments, if you would give me Liberty to speak. Consider, is there any Man in the World, who would rather be a King with all those Fears and Terrors which accompany a Kingdom, than to live in the Bosom of Rest, with all the Surety of the Condition of a Person, which by another Name, possesseth the same Power? For me it is not the Name of a King which I am ambitious of, but to do the Actions, and that ought to be the Ambition of every wise Man. Now without being exposed to the least Danger, I receive of you all those Graces which my Wish can form, and if I were a King my self, I should be obliged to do many Things against my Will. How then should a Kingdom be more desirable to me than an unenvied Power? I am not so imprudent as to prefer the dangerous Grandeur of a King, to an Estate that is more safe and advantageous. Now I please all the World; all the World make Court to me; and they who would approach your Throne, first address themselves to me: It is thro' my Hands all the Graces pass which you grant; why then

then should I slight all these Advantages, and desire to obtain a Kingdom? One who is so prudent as to consider this, could not be so unwise; and I not only never would have had those Thoughts, but I never would have suffered it in any other: And for a Confirmation of the Truth of what I have said, go to the *Pythian* Oracle, and enquire if I have not faithfully declared to you all which it answered me: And if you shall find that I have formed any Design in Conjunction with the Prophet, you shall not kill me by one single Vote, but mine shall likewise follow yours. But pray do not privately condemn me for a blind Suspicion, for if it is not just rashly to take Bad Men for Good, it is still less so to take Good Men for Bad. For I tell you that to deprive ones self of a good Friend, is to cast away ones own Life, which is most dear to us. But in Time you will know all these Things more plainly, since Time only proves who is a just Man, and you may know a wicked Man in one Day.

Cho. My Lord, he hath spoke to you very wisely, tho' your Care were never so just to prevent your Ruin; for those who judge with too much Haste, never judge with Certainty.

Oed. When any privately lies in Ambush against me, I ought to be cautious to avoid his Snares; if at such a Time I suffer Sloth to

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creep upon me, he will accomplish his wicked Enterprize, and I shall not be able to defend my self.

Cre. What therefore would you do, send me out of the Land?

Oed. No, but you shall die.

Cre. But you must first shew what is my Crime.

Oed. You talk as if you would not submit to me.

Cre. Because you act unjustly.

Oed. I act for my own Security.

Cre. So ought I likewise to act for mine.

Oed. But you are a wicked Man.

Cre. But what if these are the Dictates of blind Passion?

Oed. Yet even then I may use my Power.

Cre. No, unless you use it lawfully.

Oed. O City, City!

Cre. The City is for my Interest, not yours only.

Cho. Cease, ye Princes, *Jocasta* comes out of the Palace in a fit Juncture to determine this Strife.

ACT III. SCENE III.

Jocasta, Creon, Oedipus, Chorus.

Jo. Miserable Princes, why have you engaged your selves in this unseasonable Contest:

test? Are you not ashamed, while the Kingdom is on the very Brink of Ruin, to quarrel about your private Resentments? Go into the Palace, and you, *Creon*, retire to yours, and make not light Misfortunes greater.

Cre. Madam, *Oedipus*, your Husband, treats me with the greatest Injustice, threatening either to drive me to Banishment, or to put me to a shameful Death.

Oed. I own it, Madam, for I have discovered a Conspiracy which he had formed against me.

Cre. May the worst of Evils fall upon me, and I pray to the Gods that I may feel the Effects of the most bitter Imprecations, if I am guilty of those Crimes with which he accuses me.

Jo. O by the Gods, *Oedipus* believe him, have Respect for the Oath by which he is bound. Then have some Regard for me likewise, and for all these who are present.

Cho. I conjure you, my Lord, listen to the Queen's Intreaties.

Oed. What would you have me do? Submit to him?

Cho. Believe a Prince that was neither reckoned disobedient before, and who now hath made himself liable to the most horrible Imprecations.

Oed.

Oed. Do you know well what you demand of me?

Cho. I know.

Oed. What is it then? Speak.

Cho. That you would not ignominiously reject your Friend upon a dark Suspicion.

Oed. But consider, that while you make that Demand, you seek my Death or Banishment.

Cho. I call the Sun, the first of all the Gods, to be my Witness; that I wish without God, without Friends, I may die the worst of Deaths, if I have any such Thought. But my Soul is overwhelmed in Sadness to see my Country miserably perish, and I cannot bear that those Evils in which it is plunged, be still aggravated by Diffensions.

Oed. Let him therefore go, and if I must die, or dishonourably be expelled out of this Land, it is for your Sake, whom I respect, I grant him this Grace, not for his; for he, wheresoever he is, will be the Object of my Aversion.

Cre. It is plain you are hard to be prevailed on to grant me Pardon, but when your Passion is over, then you will be full of Grief; and such Tempers are always most uneasy to themselves.

Oed. Will you not be gone out of my Presence and let me alone?

Cre. I will go, you never knew me; but these still continue my Friends.

Cho.

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS. 203

Cho. Madam, why do you delay to take him into the Palace?

Joc. When I shall know the Cause of this Disorder, I will.

Cho. They had Words about a very uncertain Rumour, and often taunted each other for an unjust Suspicion.

Joc. Of one against the other?

Cho. Even so.

Joc. What were the Words?

Cho. While the Land is thus afflicted, we ought to cease where they did.

Oed. You see that with all your Wisdom you betray my Interest, and fill my Mind with Sadness.

Cho. My Lord I often said, and still I say, that I must be very unwise and rash, if I were capable to abandon you; who came and rescued my dear Countrey from numberless Calamities, and now, if you can, let your princely Wisdom again preserve us.

Joc. By the Gods tell me why you are so transported with Anger.

Oed. I'll tell you, Madam, for I respect you above all others in the World. It is on account of a Conspiracy which *Creon* had formed against me.

Joc. Declare his Crime if you accuse him upon sure Grounds.

Oed.

204 OEDIPUS TYRANNUS.

Oed. He says that I am the Murtherer of *Laius*.

Joc. Doth he speak it from his own Knowledge? Or did he hear it of any other?

Oed. He hath suborned this wicked Prophet, with whom he spreads those Reports, which coming from him will pass for Truths, and all the People will speak freely against me,

Joc. Now, my Lord, pass by what hath been said concerning yourself, and hear me, and learn that there is none skilful in the prophetick Art. I will give you some certain Proofs of it. Formerly the Oracle declared to *Laius*, (I say not that Oracle was delivered by *Apollo* himself, but by one of his Priests,) that it was his Fate to die by his Child, which should be born of him and me, yet it was the general Report some foreign Thieves murthered him in a Place " where three Ways meet. Having begot the Child, there pass'd not three Days before he bound his Feet to-

* *Apollo himself.*] *Jocasta* would not directly charge the Falshood upon *Apollo*, but on his Priests, who she thinks might have been corrupted.

" *Where three Ways meet.*] *Æschylus*, in his *Oedipus*, mentions the same Place where *Laius* was kill'd, for he supposeth the Shepherd to say,

ἐπίειμ' ἢ ὁδῷ τερχήλατον
Σχιστὴς κελύθει τρίοδον, ἔνθα Συμβολαῖς
Τελῶν κέλονται ποταμῶν ἡμέτερον.

gether,

gether, and delivered him to his Servant to be exposed on an inaccessible Mountain. And there you see that *Apollo* neither brought it to pass that he should be his Father's Murtherer; but that the Fears of *Laius* to die by his Son were all groundless: Yet these were the Predictions of the Oracle. Wherefore do not make your self uneasy, for God himself will easily discover those Things which he finds do need Discovery.

Oed. My *Jocasta*, how hath thy Words plunged me into sad Grief, and raised a Tumult in my Spirit?

Joc. Whence ariseth this Tumult in your Breast, my Lord?

Oed. I thought I heard you say, that *Laius* was slain in a Place where three Ways meet.

Joc. This was the Report then, nor as yet doth it cease.

Oed. And where is the Place where that Misfortune befel him?

Joc. The Countrey is called *Phocis*, where the Way which leads from *Delphi* meets with that which leads from *Daulia*.

Oed. And at what Time did this Action happen?

Joc. A little before you ascended the Throne of this Realm, this was publicly reported in the City.

Oed. Great *Jove*! What have you resolved to do with me.

206 OEDIPUS TYRANNUS.

Joc. What Thought is this you revolve in your Mind?

Oed. Do not question me, but tell me what was *Laius's* Stature, and what his Age?

Joc. He was large, his Hair began to grow white, and his Shape, my Lord, differed not much from yours.

Oed. Wo is me a Wretch, I have made my self liable to the saddest Imprecations, while I knew it not.

Joc. How say you my Lord? I cannot behold you without Horror.

Oed. I very much fear lest the Prophet be too clear sighted; but you will make a farther Discovery if you can tell me one Thing yet.

Joc. Tho' I am seized with some Horror, yet what you ask if I am able I will tell you.

Oed. Did *Laius* take this Journey with a small Train, or had he a numerous Retinue, as Kings usually have?

Joc. They * were in all five, a Herald was

* *Were in all five.*] *Seneca* hath been guilty of an Error in departing from the Plainness of the ancient Manners, and too strict adhering to those of his own Time. For he supposeth it absurd that a King should go out with so small a Number, and therefore that a great Part of *Laius's* Retinue miss'd their Road, and that only a small Number remain'd with him.

Oed. *Frequensne turba regionum cinxit latus?*

Joc. *Plures sefellit error ancipitis viae,*

Paucos fidelis curribus junxit labor.

comprised

comprised in the same Number, and *Laius* had but one Chariot.

Oed. Alas! alas! my Misfortune is now too plain. Who was it who brought you this News?

Joc. A certain Domestick who returned; the only one who preserved his Life.

Oed. Is he now in the Palace?

Joc. No, for from the Time he came from thence, and saw you possessing the Empire, and *Laius* slain, he beseeched me to send him into the Fields to overlook my Flocks, that he might not have the Grief to live in the City. I granted him that Request. But his Service which he did me deserved some greater Favour.

Oed. Cause him to come to me immediately.

Joc. He is hard by. But why do you desire that?

Oed. I fear I have said too much, therefore I would see him.

Joc. He will be here. But am I not worthy, my Lord, to know the Cause of your Grief?

Oed. I will not conceal from you my Fears. After the Obligations I owe you, to whom should I rather than to you discover my Se-

Ingenious Contrivance! to suppose a great Number to lose their Way, in a Road as plain as from *London* to *Windsor*. DACIER.

crets in this my dismal State? *Polybus* King of *Corinth* was my Father, and my Mother was Queen *Merope* a *Dorick*. I was looked upon as the greatest of all the Citizens until this Accident happen'd to me ; which tho' surprizing, yet did not deserve all the Diligence I used in bringing it to light. A certain Man in a Banquet full of Wine, calls me the supposed Son of *Polybus* : Being grieved for that Reproach, I scarce contained my self that whole Day. The next Day going to my Father and Mother, I enquired of them my Birth. They were both very sorry for that Reproach which he cast upon me. And tho' I loved them with much Tendernefs, that Injury still perplex'd me, and gave me a strong Suspicion. I stole out of the City unknown to my Father and Mother, went to the *Pythian* Oracle, and *Phæbus* did not think fit to answer precisely to my Demand ; but declared other miserable and unhappy Accidents which would befall me ; that I must unlawfully converse with my Mother, that I should shew to the World an unhappy Offspring which would fill them with Horror, and that I should be the Murtherer of my Father. Being terrified with that Answer, I avoided returning to *Corinth*, and fled hither, y conducting myself by the Stars, and endeavour'd

y *Conducting my self by the Stars.*] A proverbial Speech spoke of those who go a long Voyage, and are

to find out a Countrey whence I might be sure those terrible Things which the Oracle threatned would never come to pass: And in travelling I came into the same Place wherein you say this King was slain. I will not conceal from you, Madam, the smallest Circumstance. When I was in this Place where the Way divides itself into three Parts, a Herald and a Man mounted upon a Chariot drawn by beautiful Horses met me: The Charioteer and the Master would thrust me out of the Way by Force. Being vex'd at this Affront, I smote the Charioteer who turned me out of the Way. And as this old Man sees me coming up to his Chariot, he gave me two Strokes on my Head; nor did he suffer a Punishment equal to this Audacity: But with one Stroke of my Staff, I tumbled him down from the Middle of his Chariot, he lies dead at my Foot, and then I kill'd all his Attendants. And if there was any relation between *Laius* and this Stranger which I kill'd,

*ie. that a
punishment
for exceeding
it*

directed by the Stars where to fix their Habitation. Or perhaps the Poet meant the Time of *Oedipus's* Absence from his Countrey, measur'd out by the falling and rising of Stars at certain Seasons. Or lastly, that he directed his Course by the Stars, as Sailors do, who foretel their prosperous or unhappy Voyage according to their rising or falling. So great was the Esteem which the Ancients had for Astronomy, that they thought all Things below were influenced by celestial Bodies.

P

who

who is more miserable than my self? What Man can be more hated of the Gods? Whom it is not lawful for any of the Citizens or Strangers to receive into their Houses, nor to speak to; but they are commanded to drive me from their Houses: Nor was it any other but me who pronounced these sad Imprecations against my self. I defile his Bed whom I slew with my own Hands: Am I not vile? Am I not all over polluted? If I must flee hence, in my Flight I must avoid my Parents and my Countrey, or otherwise, I must be join'd in Marriage to my Mother, and kill my Father *Polybus*, who gave me Birth and tender Education. Cannot one say with Justice, that all this is the Curse of cruel Fortune resolved to persecute me? No therefore, no by the sacred Worship of the Gods, let me not see that terrible Day, but let me rather be driven from the Face of the Earth, than stain my self with so black a Crime.

Cho. This Relation, my Lord, gives us some Uneasiness, but until you are fully informed of him who will soon be here, you ought to preserve some hope.

Oed. I will preserve it until I have spoke with this Shepherd.

Joc. When he is come, what do you think to do then?

Oed. I shall tell you, if he will speak the same Language with you, I shall be delivered from all my Fears.

Joc.

Joc. What did I tell you, my Lord, which you most remarked?

Oed. You told me that he said Robbers kill'd him; if therefore still he will continue to say that Number, I did not kill him; for one can never be equal with many; but if he will say that one Man alone did it, then apparently that one can be no other than myself.

Joc. Be assured of this, that it is not in his Power to deny it, for all the City heard his Story, and not I alone. But if he should contradict his former Discourse, the Murther of *Laius* can never fall upon you, whom *Loxias* himself said should die by my Child, nevertheless you see that the miserable Child did not kill him, but himself perished before. Therefore, I shall give no more Credit to the last Oracle than to the first.

Oed. You judge very right, Madam, yet pray send a Servant who may order him to come before us; be that thy chief Care.

Joc. I will send immediately; but let us go into the Palace; there is nothing that I will not do to oblige you.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

² May the Gods grant me to enjoy a happy State, while I preserve that venerable Sanctity in all my Words and Actions which are required by those Laws which descended from Heaven, whereof *Olympus* is the only Father; nor did the mortal Race of Men beget them, nor is it in their Power to bury them in Oblivion; there is in those Laws a powerful God which triumphs over our Impiety, and who never grows old.

² *May the Gods grant me to enjoy a happy State while I preserve.]* *Jocasta* on receiving the Message of the natural Death of *Polybus*, whom she supposed to be real Father of *Oedipus*, who according to the Oracle was to have killed his Father; and having been told likewise by the same Oracle, that *Laius's* own Child was to be his Murtherer, which Child she thought being exposed by her in its Infancy on the Mountains, had perished there, and that *Laius* according to the common Report was killed by Robbers, tho' in every Thing she was deceived, was so presumptuous as to accuse even the Oracle of Falshood, for which the *Chorus*, tho' modestly, blames her, and in his own Person deprecates the like Impiety, and the Punishment due to her.

ANTI-

ANTISTROPHE I.

Insolence begets Tyranny; Insolence, when it adds Crime to Crime, and having raised Men to the highest Precipice, it throws them down into fatal Necessity, and then their Fortunes forsake them, and they fall from that Grandeur to which their Injustice raised them. But I beseech the Gods never to deprive the City of that Happiness of which *Oedipus* was the Author, for I still put my self under the Protection of the Gods.

STROPHE II.

But if any one is so insolent by his Actions or his Words to insult the Gods without any Fear of their Justice or Reverence for their Temples, let numberless Evils fall upon him to punish his impious Delights, since he loves Injustice, abandons himself to Impiety, and restrains not his Hands from sacrilegious Acts. What Man hereafter will govern himself by Reason? If those Practices are recompensed, to what Purpose is it for me to lead up Dances in Honour of the Gods?

ANTISTROPHE II.

No more I'll go to worship *Apollo* at the sacred Navel of the Earth, nor to the Tem-

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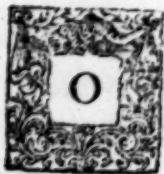
ple at ^a *Abæ*, nor to *Olympia*, if these Oracles be not justified to all the World. But thou, O *Jupiter*, universal Governour, let not your Power pass these Things unpunish'd, for they disrespect the Oracles which foretold the Fate of *Laius*, nor is *Apollo* honoured, and the Worship of the Gods is quite neglected.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

Jocasta, Chorus, Attendants.

Joc.



^b Princes of the Land, I took in my Hand these Crowns to go to the Temples of the Gods to offer them Sacrifices, for

^a *Abæ.*] A Place in *Lycia* where *Apollo* had a Temple, saith the Scholiast; others say it was a Village of *Phocis*, where his Temple stood before that of *Delfhi* was built; particularly *Herodotus*, and *Stephanus* the *Byzantian*. We are told by *Pausanias*, that this Temple was burn'd by *Xerxes*. *Camerarius* cites a Passage from *Pausanias*, wherein he reckons *Abæ* among the Cities of *Phocis*, and says that those who inhabit it came first from *Argos*, and that it had its Name from *Abas* their Leader, the Son of *Lynceus* and *Hypermetra*.

^b *Princes of the Land.*] Among the Ancients not only Kings, but all honourable Men and Chiefs of the Kingdom were called *νοβες ἀνδρες*, and such are the
Oedipus;

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Oedipus is disturbed in Mind with many anxious Thoughts, nor as a prudent Man judges of the Oracle which he heard to Day, by that which was delivered formerly, but listens attentively to those who tell him terrible Things, and all the Counsel which I give him is vain. Therefore I came to thee as a Suppliant, O *Lycian Apollo*, for you are the nearest, with Sacrifices and Prayers: Beseeching you would send us a blessed Deliverance from our present Evils: We are all in the utmost Consternation to see this Prince in the same Pressure of Spirit as we see a Pilot, who can no longer defend his Ship against the Fury of the Winds.

Chorus here called, not so much from their Power, as the Reverence due to their Office, being some of them Priests, and the rest ancient *Theban* Citizens. For the original Signification of the Word *ἄναξ*, is a Saviour or Defender; wherefore the Gods are commonly called *ἄνκτες*. *Homer* tells us that *Scamandrius*, the Son of *Hector*, was by the *Trojans* called *Astyanax*, because his Father was τὸ ἄσιν *ἄναξ*, the Defender of the City.

αὐτὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι
Ἄστυᾶναξ, οἷοι δὲ ἐρύειν Ἰλίου Ἐκλῶρα.

*But him Astyanax the Trojans call,
From his great Father who defends the Wall.*

Mr. Dryden.

‘O *Lycian Apollo*, for you are the nearest.] There was as well at *Thebes* as at *Athens* a *Gymnasium*, call’d the *Lyceum*, where *Apollo* was worship’d, which being the nearest to the Palace of all the Temples, *Apollo* is therefore call’d ἀγχις *nearest*.

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ACT IV. SCENE II.

Shepherd of Corinth, Chorus, Jocasta.

Shep. *Thebans,* ^d can I learn from you where is the Palace of King *Oedipus*? But chiefly tell me of himself, if you know where he is.

Cho. This is the Palace, and himself is within. This is his Queen, and the Mother of his Children.

Shep. May she be ever happy in her Family, and may nothing disturb the glorious Union between her and her Royal Consort.

^d *Can I learn from you.]* The Arrival of this *Corinthian* Shepherd is an admirable Incident, and produces the best Remembrance the Theatre ever saw. For this Shepherd thinking to convince *Oedipus* of his Error, and inform him who were really his Parents, instead of doing him a Piece of Service which he designed, cast him into the most horrible of all Misfortunes, and let him see that he was both a Parricide, and an incestuous Person.

Aristotle brings this as an Example of the most surprising Peripetie that can possible come upon a Theatre; for he saith, *Cap. XI. Art. Poet.* "A Peripetie is
" a Change of one Fortune into another, contrary to
" what was expected; and that Change happens either
" necessarily or probably, as in the *Oedipus* of *Sophocles*: For he who comes to tell him agreeable News,
" and ought to deliver him out of those Fears, into
" which the Thoughts of committing Incest with his
" Mother had cast him, does the quite contrary, in
" telling him plainly what he is.

Joc.

Joc. And you also Stranger, because of your good Wishes on my Behalf; But tell me why you came here, and what News you bring.

Shep. Happy News, Madam, to your whole House, and to the King.

Joc. What is it? And from whence are you come?

Shep. From *Corinth*, that Tale which I shall soon unravel, will certainly give you Joy, but it will likewise give you Sadness.

Joc. But what can produce in me two such contrary Effects?

Shep. It is the Report at *Corinth*, that the People of *Isthmus* are resolved to make *Oedipus* their King.

Joc. But why? Is not old *Polybus* still King?

Joc. No, Madam, he is dead.

Joc. What sayest thou? Is old *Polybus* dead?

Shep. Unless I say true, I submit to lose my Life.

Joc. Servants, go speedily and tell your Master this News. O! ye Oracles of the Gods, where are you? *Oedipus* formerly fled from his Countrey, for Fear he should kill his Father; and now the Fates have cut his Thred of Life, and not his Son.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

Oedipus, Jocasta, Chorus, Shepherd of Corinth.

Oed. On what important Occasion, my *Jocasta*, have you sent for me out of the Palace?

Joc. Hear this Stranger, and when you have heard, consider on what Foundations are grounded these venerable Oracles of the Gods.

Oed. Who is he? And what News doth he bring me?

Joc. He comes out of *Corinth*, with the News that your Father *Polybus* is dead.

Oed. What sayest thou, Stranger? Speak this thy self.

Shep. If I must begin with this News, then know that he is dead.

Oed. Whether was it by a Conspiracy, or by a Disease?

Shep. A small Disease sends antient Bodies to the Grave.

Oed. It seems then he died of a Disease.

Shep. Yes, and for his great Age to which he lived.

Oed. Oh! Oh! Why then *Jocasta* should any one regard the *Pythian* foretelling Altar; or those Birds which chirp in the Air? who reported that I was to kill my Father, yet he lies in his Grave, and I am here; nor did I
ever

ever hold up Arms to touch his Life, unless he died with the Grief that he could not see me; so he might indeed have died by me: Therefore *Polybus* lies in his Tomb, and hath born with him the Accomplishment of those Oracles, which deserve only my Contempt.

Joc. Did I not tell you this before?

Oed. You did, but I was seized with Fear.

Joc. Therefore now do not let such Thoughts as these disturb your Mind.

Oed. Ought I not to fear, lest I pollute my Mother's Bed?

Joc. But what should a Man fear whom Fortune favours? There is no foreseeing future Events with Certainty; it is the best to lead an easie Life free from anxious Care. Do not fear to commit that Incest with your Mother, for many Men in Dreams imagined that they have slept with their Mothers; but he who would lead a peaceable Life, must disregard such Illusions.

Oed. Well hast thou spoke, did not she live who bore me; but since she lives, there is still much Reason to fear, after all you can say.

Joc. Is not the Death of your Father a great Sign that the other Oracle will not be accomplished?

Oed. It is true; but yet I say while she lives, my Fears are not groundless.

Shep. But what Woman plungeth you into all this Fear?

Oed.

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Oed. *Merope*, old Man, the Wife of *Polybus*.

Shep. What is there in her to cause your Fear?

Oed. The Accomplishment of a grievous Oracle.

Shep. What Oracle, my Lord? May I know it?

Oed. *Loxias* once said, that I must converse carnally with my Mother, and spill my Father's Blood with these my Hands; wherefore long ago I lived far from *Corinth*, and their Absence was happy to me, notwithstanding it is a great Pleasure to see my Parents.

Shep. And did these Fears banish you from *Corinth*?

Oed. Yes, for I was not willing to be my Father's Murtherer.

Shep. Why therefore should I not deliver you from that Fear, since out of Kindness to you I came?

Oed. If you do, you shall receive of me a Recompence proportionable to that great Service.

Shep. And indeed for that Reason I came, that when you return to *Corinth*, I might deserve your Grace, and live happily under your Government.

Oed. But I will by no Means go to my Mother.

Shep. It is plain you are ignorant of what you do.

Oed.

Oed. How, old Man, by the Gods explain that Riddle to me.

Shep. Yes, if it be that which keeps you from returning home to *Corinth*.

Oed. I dread, lest *Phæbus* hath been too true.

Shep. What, lest you commit Incest with your Mother?

Oed. It is that which perpetually affrights me.

Shep. But be assured you put your self in Fear without just Cause.

Oed. Why? If I am Son of those Parents?

Shep. Therefore I inform you that *Polybus* was not your Father.

Oed. What hast thou said? Was not *Polybus* my Father?

Shep. No more than I am, but even alike.

Oed. But how is he who begat me no Father?

Shep. Neither did he beget you, nor I.

Oed. Why then did he call me his Son.

Shep. Know that he received you as a Gift from my Hands.

Oed. Did he so cherish what he received from another Hand?

Shep. The want of Children engaged him to do it.

Oed. Did you buy me? Or was I your Son?

Shep. I found you on the Top of Mount *Cithæron*.

Oed.

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Oed. Why did you travel over those Places?

Shep. There I had the Care of some Flocks.

Oed. Then you was a Shepherd therefore.

Shep. My Lord I faved your Life in that Time.

Oed. In what State did you find me?

Shep. Your pierced Feet may witness that.

Oed. Wo is me! What old Evil is that you mention?

Shep. I will ease you of your Doubt, the Ends of your Feet were boared thro'.

Oed. I received this Reproach from my swadling Bands.

Shep. ^e And from thence you received the Name you bear.

Oed. By the Gods tell me, from my Father or Mother?

Shep. I know not, but he who gave thee to me, knows it better than I.

Oed. Did you receive me of another, or did you find me your self?

Shep. No, but another Shepherd gave thee to me.

^e And from thence you received the Name you bear.]
i. e. By Composition of these Words, διὰ τὸ οἰδῆν τὰς
πόδας. Thus Seneca brings in an old Man telling him,

*Forata ferro gesserat vestigia,
Tumore nactus nomen ac vitio pedum.*

Your Feet were pierc'd with Iron, from which Sore
And Tumour you are named.

Oed.

Oed. Who is he? Can you tell me?

Shep. He was said to be one of the Shepherds of *Laius*.

Oed. Of him who was formerly King of this Countrey.

Shep. Yes, my Lord, the same.

Oed. Is he still living, that I may see him?

Shep. You may know that best who are of this Countrey.

Oed. Is there any of you who stand here, who know that Shepherd whom he mentions; and who saw him in the Fields, or here? Declare it: For this Matter must be made plain.

[*To the Chorus.*

Cho. I suppose him no other than him who is of the Fields, whom before you desired to see; but the Queen her self may best tell that.

Oed. Madam, Do you know whether he whom we sent to search for be him whom he speaks of?

Joc. Who is it whom he spoke of? Be not disturbed, nor permit that these Things which so rashly were spoke of, be repeated.

Oed. That cannot be, since I have found out all these Lights, I will not neglect to discover my Birth.

Joc. By the Gods, if you regard your Peace of Mind, enquire not that; it is enough that I am a Wretch.

Oed. The Affront would not fall upon you, tho' I were born a Slave in the third Degree.

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Joc. Nevertheless I beseech you obey me, and cease to make this Search.

Oed. I will not be persuaded, I must discover my Birth.

Joc. Believe me, my Lord, my Reasons for giving you this Counsel are just.

Oed. All that you say only augments my Pain, and excites my Curiosity.

Joc. O unfortunate Man, I wish you never may know who you are.

Oed. Let some go and bring that Shepherd to me, let her rejoice in her noble Race.

Joc. Alas! alas! unhappy Man, this is the only Thing I have to say to you, and this is the last Time that ever I shall say that.

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

Chorus, Oedipus, Shepherd of Corinth.

Cho. What Sadness obliged the Queen to retire? I fear lest that Silence will have some dreadful End.

Oed. Let her do what she will, tho' my Parentage is but mean, I will know it. She thinks greatly, as a Woman, and doubtless is ashamed of my mean Birth; [†] but I think my

[†] *But I thinking my self the Child of Fortune, &c.]* These are called Sons of Fortune, who being of unknown or very obscure Birth, have raised themselves,

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS. 225

self the Child of Fortune, who gave freely to me, and I will never blush at her Favours. I was born of that Mother, and kindred Months raised me from a contemptible State to the highest Degree of Honour, and my Birth would be the same, tho' I should cease to know it.

Chorus, STROPHE.

Cho. If I am a Prophet and skilful in my Art, by *Jove*, *Cithæron*, to Morrow shall not pass, before you shall discover to us the Country and the Mother of *Oedipus*; and e'er we shall institute Dances in your Honour, to give you Thanks for the Pleasure you will do our King. *Apollo*, grant that my Predictions may be accomplished.

ANTISTROPHE.

And you, O Prince! & who of the immortal Gods begat you, what Daughter of *Pan*,

or Upstarts. Thus *Horace Sat. VI. Lib. 2.* speaking of himself says.

Luserat in campo fortunæ filius.

DACIER.

& *Who of the immortal Gods?*] Observe the extraordinary Love of the *Chorus* for *Oedipus*, and how willing they are to interpret every Thing to his Advantage; for here they hope he will prove to be Son of

Q

God

God of the Mountains, bore you? Art thou the Fruits of *Apollo's* Amours? For he often diverts himself in the Fields and Mountains: Or did *Mercury* the *Cyllenian* God, or *Bacchus* who inhabits the Mountain Tops, beget you on any of the *Heliconian* Nymphs, with whom he most commonly sports?

Oed. If I can judge of an old Man whom I never met with before, I think I see that Shepherd whom we waited for so long, and he agrees in old Age with this Stranger; besides, I know those that lead him to be my Servants; but you may know him better than me, for doubtless you have seen him before.

Cho. I know him, for he belonged to *Laius*, and was his faithful Shepherd.

Oed. First I ask you (*Corinthian* Stranger) is this he of whom you spake to me?

Shep. He is the same.

one of the Gods of the Mountains. It is well known that *Pan* is the God of Shepherds, and that his Dominion is in the Fields, therefore he is called *πόιων*, and the Scholiasts say that *Apollo* is likewise so called; probably he might have that Name from having been Shepherd to *Admetus*. And *Triclinius* tells us, that *Bacchus* is said to inhabit the Mountains, because his raging Women are conversant about them, or because he had a Temple in *Cithæron*.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

Oedipus, Shepherd of Corinth, Phorbas, Chorus.

Oed. Approach, old Man, and answer to what I shall ask you. Wast thou once of *Laius*?

Phor. I was his Servant, not bought, but brought up in his Family.

Oed. What Business did you follow?

Phor. I had the Care of his Flocks for the most Part of my Life.

Oed. In what Places was you ordinarily conversant?

Phor. On Mount *Cithæron*, and other Places thereto adjoining.

Oed. Do you know this Man? Have you ever seen him any where?

Phor. In what Employment, what Man do you mean?

Oed. He, who is before your Eyes, did you ever meet with him any where?

Phor. I do not remember that ever I saw him in my Life.

Shep. It is no Wonder, my Lord, but I will quickly bring to his Remembrance Things which he hath forgot: For I know well that he knows me; on *Cithæron* he fed two Flocks, and I but one, and we passed together

Q 2

three

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^h three whole successive Seasons from the Beginning of Spring, to the End of Autumn; but at the Approach of Winter, I drave mine into my Stables, but he drave his into those of *Laius*. Do I say the Truth, or do I not?

Phor. You say what is true; I remember it, tho' it be a long Time ago.

Shep. Speak, tell me; do you remember that you gave me a certain Infant, that I should bring it up as my own?

Phor. What is it you say? Why do you ask that Question?

Shep. This, my Friend, is that same Infant.

Phor. Curses light on thee, thou Wretch, wilt thou not be silent?

Oed. O do not chastize him, it is you who deserve Chastizement rather than he.

Phor. My Lord, wherein do I offend?

Oed. In not speaking of that Infant of whom he enquires.

Phor. He knows not what he says, but amuseth you unprofitably.

^h *Three whole successive Seasons.]* The Greek is, τρεῖς ὅλως ἐμμένοντες χρόνους. That the Sense I have given of this Passage is right, not three whole Months, as it is in most Editions, is plain from hence; that from the Spring to the rising of *Arcturus*, which is about the Beginning of *October*, much exceeds three Months; and from the Spring to the setting thereof, are reckoned the three Seasons of the Year, *i. e.* Spring, Summer, and Autumn.

Oed.

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Oed. You will not speak for Favour, but Tortures shall make you speak.

Phor. No, by the Gods, do not so affront my Age.

Oed. Will not some body quickly bind his Hands?

Phor. Ah me a Wretch! Why? What would you know?

Oed. Did you give that Infant to him whom he mentions?

Phor. I gave it to him, but wish that that had been the last Day of my Life!

Oed. Wish not for Death; if you will not tell me the Truth, that shall be your Portion.

Phor. But much more if I speak, I perish.

Oed. This Man, it seems, is only for delaying.

Phor. Not I, my Lord; but I have told that I gave it to him.

Oed. Whence did you receive him? Was he yours, or did you receive him of another?

Phor. He was not mine, but I received him of another.

Oed. But from which of the Citizens, and from what House did you receive him?

Phor. By the Gods, Sir, enquire no more.

Oed. You are a dead Man, if I ask you again.

Phor. He was of the Family of *Laius*.

Oed. Whether was he his Son, or one of his Servants?

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Phor. Wo is me! Cruel Necessity enforces me to speak.

Oed. And me to hear, but yet I must hear it.

Phor. He was called his Child. The Queen can better tell than I, whose he is.

Oed. Did she give him to you?

Phor. Yes, my Lord.

Oed. For what End?

Phor. That I should kill him.

Oed. Miserable Woman, the Child she bore, for what Reason?

Phor. For Fear of an unfortunate Oracle.

Oed. What Oracle?

Phor. The Oracle was, that he should kill his Parents.

Oed. Then why did you give him to this old Man?

Phor. Out of Pity, my Lord, and I thought to send him into another Countrey; but he in saving your Life, reserved you for numberless Evils; and if you are he whom he speaks of, the World cannot produce a more unhappy Man.

Oed. ⁱ Alas! alas! all Things are come out

ⁱ *Alas! alas! all Things are now come out plain.*] This Remembrance is what *Aristotle* calls the most beautiful of all, because it is accompanied with a Change of Fortune, or Peripetie: For it is no sooner made, but *Oedipus* falls from Happiness to Misery. *Cap. XI. Art. Poet.* "The best Remembrance is that which is found with the Peripetie, as in the *Oedipus*, for that will pro-
plain.

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plain. O Sun! whose radiant Beams enlighten the Earth, this is the last Time I behold thee, who am born of those of whom I should not; who have conversed carnally with her from whose loathed Embraces Nature commanded me to fly, and have slain with my cursed Hand those who gave me Being.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV. SCENE VI.

Chorus.

Cho. O! Race of Mortals, how little I esteem the State of your Felicity! It is but an idle Dream that appears great, and vanishes in the same Moment. By your sad Example, most unhappy *Oedipus*, I am taught to say, no Man on Earth is happy; who, raised to the highest State of mortal Glory, after your sig-

“ dence either Compassion, or Terror, of which Tragedy is an Imitation on this Passage”. Mr. *Dacier* hath these following Remarks. “ This Reason is drawn from this general Principle, that Tragedy is the Imitation of an Action; and not only of an Action, but of such an Action which excites Pity and Fear; and this is found in that Remembrance which he prefers to the rest: There is Action, since it makes the good or ill Fortune of the principal Personages; and it can’t fail of exciting Terror or Compassion, since in one and the same Moment it decides Things of so great Importance, and produces such grand Effects.

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nal Victory over *Sphinx*, who ravaged our Country, didst deliver it from the Death she threatned, from our Deliverer became our King and was honoured as a God in *Thebes*: Now who is more unhappy? Who more oppressed by Fortune's Malice? Who ever suffered so terrible a Change? O noble *Oedipus*, ^k the same great Port sufficed both for your Father and your self to sail into. How could, unhappy Man, how could your Father's Bed receive you so long without your Knowledge? Time only, who sees all Things, found you out, and discovered your unhappy Marriage begetting and begotten! O Son of *Laius*, I wish I had never seen thee; I lament thy most unhappy State, who, after you had restored Light to my dying Eyes, hast plunged them into most horrid Darknes.

^k *The same great Port.*] The Poet metaphorically calls *Jocasta* a Port, or Place where Ships both put in, and from whence they launch forth, because *Oedipus* having married his Mother, begat Children on the same Body of which he was born; so was both her Son, and Father to her Children: Or because she was married both to her Husband and Son.



ACT V. SCENE I.

Shepherd of *Corinth*, Chorus, Messenger.

Mess.  OST honourable Seniors of this Land, what are you now about to hear and see, and what Grief will you conceive if you interest your selves in the Evils of the House of *Labdacus*? For I am persuaded that neither ¹ the Water of *Ister*, nor *Phasis*, can wash

¹ Neither the Water of *Ister* nor *Phasis*.] Gr. Ἰστροῦ καὶ Φάσις. They were two great Rivers, the former, otherwise called the *Danube*, passeth by *Illyricum* and runs into the *Euxine* Sea; the other is a famous River in *Colchis*.

The *Pagans* fancied that the Water of the Sea, or those great Rivers, had Power to wash away all Pollution of Crimes: In *Virgil*, *Aeneas* would not touch his Household Gods before he had purged himself of the Blood he had spilt.

*Me bello e tanto digressum & caede recenti,
Attrectare nefas, donec me flumine vivo
Abluero.*

Ajax in the Tragedy so called, went out upon Pretence of reconciling himself to the Gods, by washing after killing the Beasts. And St. *Augustin* against the *Donatists* says, *In multis Idolorum sacrilegis sacris baptizati*

the

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the House from those Crimes by which it is polluted, which are now unseen, and will soon come to Light, which have been willingly committed. For the most afflicting of all Evils are those which are committed of deliberate Purpose.

Cbo. Nothing is wanting from what we have heard to compleat our Misery; but what can you farther say?

Mess. *Jocasta* is no more.

Cbo. Most wretched Princess, how did she die?

Mess. By her own Hand: Words are too weak to express the Horror of that absent Spectacle, yet as far as my Memory will permit me you shall hear the sad Recital of her sufferings. She entered with all the Agonies of black Despair into the Palace, and flew suddenly to the nuptial Chamber, tearing her Hair with both her Hands; and having shut the Door, she calls *Laius* formerly slain, mentioning her Offspring, by whom he was miserably murdered, but left her to bear unhappy Children to her own Child: Then she addressed her self to her Bed, where the Wretch both bore a Husband by her Husband, and Children by her Son. How after that she died, I know not; for *Oedipus* rushed in roaring,

homines perhibentur. i. e. washed. The Pagans had this Notion from the Knowledge of the Deluge, by which they learned that God purged the World.

who

who hindered us from beholding her Misery. Then we fixed our Eyes on him to observe his Motions; as he comes along he begs of us to give him a Sword, asked to know where he should find his Wife, whom he would not look upon as his Wife, but his Mother, who bore both himself and his Children. We who were present did not regard to grant his Request, yet some God in Favour to his Phrensie, conducted him to her; then he approached with dreadful Cries, as if some drew him by Force. He rushed through the double Gates, drew from their Hinges the sonorous Portcullis, and comes into the Chamber, where we see the Queen hanging by a twisted Rope; no sooner he beheld her, but he roars out like a furious Lion, looses the hanging Rope, and the wretched Queen falls on the Ground: ^m And then ap-

^m *And then appeared a more horrible.*] This Description of the Manner in which *Oedipus* cut out his Eyes, is very ingenious and eloquent; and is a good Instance where that general Rule, which *Horace* lays down, is observed.

----- *Multaque tolles*

Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.

Had the Action it self of *Oedipus* been represented on the Theatre, nothing could have been more terrible and shocking. And this Narration both hides the Horror, and moves at the same Time the Compassion of the Audience for that miserable Prince. So great is the Force of Art in making Things, in their own Nature disagreeable, become Objects of Pleasure and Delight

peared

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peared a more horrible Thing, for *Oedipus* pulling the golden Clasps from her Garments wherewith she was adorned, he then forced the Points of them into his Eyes, saying thus; That he would not behold her, nor what Evils he had been the Cause of, but plunged in eternal Darkness, he would not see, nor distinguish those Objects which present themselves before him. In repeating incessantly these Words, he raised up his Eyebrows and cut out his Eyes; his bloody Eye-balls stained his Beard, nor did they only send down moistening Drops, but even a black Shower of Blood, thick as Hail, poured down. These are the

by an ingenious Narration: For as in painting, an Object, in it self the most detested to human Eyes, may be so painted by an ingenious Artist, as to seem very agreeable upon Canvass; so it is in Poetry, as *Despreaux* ingeniously observes in his Art of Poetry.

*Il n'est point de serpent, ni de monstre odieux,
Qui par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux.
D'un pinceau delicat l'artifice agreable,
Du plus affreux objet fait un objet aimable.
Ainsi pour nous charmer, la Tragedie en pleurs,
D'Oedipe tout sanglant, fit parler les douleurs.*

There's not a Monster bred beneath the Sky,
But well dispos'd by Art, may please the Eye.
A curious Workman by his Skill divine,
From an ill Object makes a good Design.
Thus to delight us, Tragedy in Tears,
Provokes, for *Oedipus*, our Hopes and Fears,

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sad Calamities in which the King and Queen had both a Share; and their former Felicity, which was before truly great, is now turned to Weeping, Lamentation, Death, Infamy; and the worst of Evils that can be named are less than theirs.

Cho. But with what Evils is he now oppressed?

Mess. He roars out that they should open the Gates, and shew to all the *Thebans* a Parricide, and his Mother's --- saying abominable Things, which I dare not mention; that he would cast himself out of the Kingdom, and the Imprecations which he had pronounced against himself suffered him no longer to continue in his Palace! In his present State he hath need of some Assistance, and some Leader, for this Evil is greater than can be born. The Folds of the Gates are opened, and soon thou wilt see such a Spectacle, as would move an Enemy to Pity.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE II.

The Palace Gates are open'd, from whence Oedipus approaches with his Eyes pull'd out, which the Chorus seeing, startle and turn away their Faces.

Chorus, Oedipus.

Cho. O Spectacle of Horror which none can bear to see! the saddest that ever I beheld. Miserable Prince, what Madness hath seized you? What cruel God hath plunged you in these Seas of Woe? Alas, alas, unhappy Man! I cannot look on thee tho' I have a strong Desire to see you, to speak to you, and to hear you; such Horror dost thou give me.

Oed. Alas! alas! miserable Man, to what Land am I born, whither is my Voice spread! O my Fortune, whither art thou come?

Cho. Forsaken you quite, and given Place to the saddest Evils, Evils which none can bear to hear or see.

Oed. O my Cloud of Darkness which covers my Eyes, abominable, and which none can dissipate! Wo is me, my sad Grief which proceeds not only from my Rage of Madness, but likewise from the Memory of my Crimes!

Cho. In this thy wretched State, thy Complaints are just.

Oed. Ah! thou who art still my only Friend in my Misfortunes, who still art careful even for me a blind Man; alas! alas! thou dost not deceive me, but I well know thy Voice, altho' involved in Darknes.

Cho. What desperate Deed is this thou hast done! How darest thou thus tear out thy Eyes? What angry God lent thee his Aid?

Oed. It was *Apollo*, my Friend, who is the only Author of my Miseries; none ever lent me his Aid, this wretched Hand alone hath done the Deed. Why should I longer enjoy my Sight, to behold nought but Objects of Horror and Sadness?

Cho. My Lord, what you say is too true.

Oed. Is there ought, my Friends, that I could behold with Pleasure? Is there ought that I can love, or converse with? Banish me hence with speed, my Friends; banish me hence a cursed Monster, and the most hated of all Mortals to the Gods.

Cho. Thou art doubly wretched, both for thy Ills themselves, and for thy Sense of them: O! that I had never known thee.

Oed. Let him perish whosoever he was, who unloosed the cruel Cords from off my Feet, and preserved me from the cold Arms of Death. His Pity hath been fatal to me, for had I then died, I had not been the unhappy Cause of so many Evils to my self and Friends.

Cho.

Cho. There I too had been happy to my Wish.

Oed. I had not been my Father's Murderer, nor had Men seen me marry her who gave me Life. But now I am a wretched Son of defiled Parents, a Monster born of her from whom I begat Children, and to say all, the greatest and most horrid Evils are fallen upon *Oedipus*.

Cho. My Lord, I know not how to approve this Action, it had been better for you not to have been at all, than thus to drag a miserable Life, deprived of Eyes.

Oed. Do not tell me that I have done Ill in tearing out my Eyes, for I know not with what Eyes I could see my Father when I come to the subterraneous Habitations, or my miserable Mother; to both which greater Evil I have done than Death it self. But as my Children daily grow up, still grows my Pleasure in beholding them: By no means, for neither Children, nor Countrey, nor Palace nor sacred Images of the Gods could afford Pleasure to my Eyes, of which I, a most unhappy Man, one of the greatest in *Thebes*, have deprived my self, in commanding that all should banish that impious Man whom the Gods have declared the Cause of all the publick Calamities, and to say all in one Word, this Son of *Laius*. And after I have discovered my Shame could I enjoy in Quietness my Sight? By no means, but if there were a Way to seal up

up my hearing Faculty, I would make this double Sacrifice to my Despair, by closing up that Gate from the Knowledge of my Evils, that I might be both Deaf and Blind, for that is sweet to have but little Sense in such terrible Evils. O *Cithæron*! why did you receive me? Why, when you had received me, did you not suffer me to perish? That I had not shewn my self to Men of what Parents I was born! O *Polybus*, and *Corinth* falsely called my Countrey, you have brought me up under a humane Form, a Monster who am a Reproach to Nature. O triple Ways, and dark Forest, Grove of Oaks, and narrow Place in the triple Way, who have drank my Father's Blood which my Hands have shed, do you still remember me, and what Crimes you have seen me commit, and how far short they come of those I have since committed! O Marriage, fatal Marriage, you have begot me, and having so done, made me return to the Womb that wrapt me yet unborn, and produced Fathers, Brothers, Children, Husbands, Wives, Mothers, and the most vile Deeds that humane Thoughts can form: One ought to tremble even to pronounce such horrid Crimes. By the Gods as soon as possible hide me, kill me or cast me into the Sea, where you shall never see me more; ^m deign

^m *Deign to touch, &c.*] This is founded upon the Superstition of the Ancients, who supposed that if any

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to touch a miserable Man; do me this last Service; fear not; the Evils which I suffer cannot befall any but my self.

Cho. But *Creon* is here in a proper Time for your Demand, both to give you such Counsel and Assistance as are necessary for you, for instead of thee he is left as sole Guardian of this Land.

Oed. Wo is me! What therefore shall I say to him? What Succours can I expect after those unjust Suspensions which I had of him?

ACT V. SCENE III.

Creon, Oedipus, Chorus, Oedipus's Children.

Cre. I came not to insult your Evils, *Oedipus*, nor to reproach you; but you *Thebans*, if the Race of Men be not your Care, at least revere the sacred Sun's all feeding Flame; which hath brought to Light and pointed out that Victim on which all our Sufferings are justly charged. A Victim, which neither the Earth, nor the ⁿ sacred Rain which is sprinkled

one touched a wicked Man, he thereby drew down upon his own Head the Anger of the Gods. In a *Latin* Tragedy cited by *Cicero*, *Thyestes* says to the *Chorus*,

Nolite, hospites, ad me adire, illico, istic,

Ne contagio mea bonis, umbrave obsit.

Tanta vis sceleris in Corpore hæret.

DACIER.

ⁿ *Sacred Rain.*] Gr. ὑμεῖς ἱερὸς, it is so called because the Priests sprinkled the Heads of those who were present at the Sacrifices with holy Water, which fell on them as Rain. The Apostle seems to allude to this Practice in the following Words: *Heb. x. 22.*

on

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on us at these Altars, nor the Light can endure. Go and speedily take him into the Palace, for it is fit that Relations only should be Witnesses of each others Afflictions.

Oed. By the Gods, since that you have disproved my Opinion of you, and being the best of Men come to me who am the worst, grant me this Favour which I ask of you; it is more for your Sake than for mine I ask it.

Cre. What is your Request?

Oed. Banish me out of this Land as speedy as possible; send me where I shall no more hold Discourse with Man.

Cre. Be well assured I had done it, only that first I would learn from the Gods what is proper to be done.

Oed. But have not the Gods plainly declared, that you should destroy me?

Cre. But ° in the State we are in, we ought to do nothing before we consult them.

Oed. Will you consult the Gods for such a Wretch as I am?

Let us draw near, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water. And Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your Filthiness.

° *In the State we are in.]* Tho' it had been positively decreed by the Oracle, that the Murtherer of *Laius* should be taken away from the Earth, yet he being the lawful King, *Creon* thought it proper to consult again the Oracle as to *Oedipus's* Request.

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Cre. Ah! your Misfortunes warn us what Faith we ought to put in their Oracles.

Oed. I beseech and exhort you to bury the Princess who lies dead in the Palace, and you will perform your Duty to your Relation; for me, there is no Reason my Father's City should desire my longer Continuance among them, but suffer me to live on Mount *Cithæron*, which my Father and Mother, when alive, chose for my Sepulchre, that I might die according to their Wills, where they decreed I should end my Days. This I know well, that neither Disease nor any other Accident have Power to put a Period to my Days; for I should not have been saved from the Arms of Death, but to be reserved for some more horrid Evils. But let my cruel Fortune do what she will with me, take no Care of my Sons, they are Men, so that wherever they are their Courage will be their sure Defence; but earnestly I entreat you to take Care of my poor Daughters, who have been always fed with the choicest Dainties; tho' I was absent they always shared the same Things with me. Permit me to hold them in my Arms, and lament over them those Evils in which they are involved: If I touch them with my Hand, I shall think I see them still. By the Gods do I not hear my Children weeping? And *Creon* in pity to me hath sent me my Children.

3

Cre.

Cre. Yes, my Lord, I have brought them, being willing to afford you this long desired Pleasure.

Oed. May you be ever happy, and may a milder Fortune always accompany you than ever did me. My Children, where are you? Come to your Father's Arms, who am your Brother; a Father, who have cut out my Eyes, that now I cannot see you; a Father, who, tho' innocent, have begot you of her who bore me. I mourn your Fate, my Children, when I consider the remaining Part of your wretched Life, which you must live among Men: In what Assemblies of Citizens will you appear, what Feasts, from whence you will not come weeping home, instead of the Pleasure of seeing? But when you shall arrive to Maturity of Age to be married, who will marry you? P Who is he who will cast away his Children, to bear those Reproaches which are charg'd upon our Family? What Evil is wanting to compleat your Misery? Your Father kill'd his Father, and begat you of the same Mother from whence himself

P *Who is he who will cast away his Children, &c.*] It was look'd upon among the *Grecians*, a reproachful Thing for a Virgin to live long unmarried: Thus *Orestes* mourns *Electra's* unmarried Life. It was the same among the *Hebrews*, for which Reason *Judges xi. 37.* *Jephtha's* Daughter desired two Month's Time of her Father, to go up and down the Mountains to bewail her Virginity,

was

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was born. These Reproaches will be cast on you, and after this who will marry you? There is not one, my Children! But it will be your Fortune to wear away your Lives neglected and unmarried. Son of *Menæceus*, since you are left sole Father to them, for we who begat them are no more, do not despise them in their wretched State, poor, friendless and unmarried, nor let them suffer that Punishment which is due only to my Crimes. But have pity on their Misery and their Youth, who have no Friend but you, grant me to touch your Hand, in token that you hear my Prayer. To you, my Children, if you had Understanding, I would commend many Things; but as you have not, pray only to the Gods for me, [¶] that they would not let me always live; and to grant that you may live a happier Life ever while it lasts than your Father.

Cre. You have shed Tears enough, go into the Palace.

Oed. I must obey you, how unpleasant soever it is to me.

Cre. All Things have their proper Seasons.

[¶] *That they would not let me always live.*] The Text here hath been corrupted; the true Reading is *ὡς καὶ ἔστιν*, and according to this I have translated it, not *ὡς καὶ ἔστιν*, which is not Sense.

Oed.

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Oed. Knowest thou what Favour I would ask?

Cre. What Favour?

Oed. That you would immediately banish me from this Land.

Cre. You ask from me a Gift which the Gods have enjoyn'd.

Oed. But I am the most odious of all Men to the Gods.

Cre. Therefore our Request shall the sooner be granted.

Oed. Do you assure me of that?

Cre. I never speak but what I think.

Oed. Take me away then when you please.

Cre. Go in, but quit your Children.

Oed. Ah, do not take them from me.

Cre. Do not insist to keep them, you know how often that of which you was most desirous hath been most fatal to you.

Cho. ^r Inhabitants of *Thebes*, you see this *Oedipus*, who explain'd the famed *Ænigma*, and to whose Valour all Things submitted; who owed his Grandeur only to his Spirit and

^r *Inhabitants of Thebes.*] That which the *Chorus* saith here is properly an *Exode* or *Epilogue*, such as they ordinarily add to the Ends of Fables, and comprehends the moral Sense. This Epilogue is not sung, as *Aristotle* tells us in his *Art. Poet. cap. 12.* “The *Exode*” (saith he) is all that which is said after the *Chorus* hath left off singing, not to begin again.

his

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his Courage, into what sad Calamities is he fallen? So that when we consider his unhappy end, we may learn from thence to pronounce no Mortal happy in the World, before we have seen him happily pass over the last Day of his Life.

F I N I S.



